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THE

BALLADS OF SCOTLAND

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EDITED BY

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IN TWO VOLUMES

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TO

'Y DEAREST MOTHER

THIS WORK

'S AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

INTRODUCTION.

In offering to the public a collected and collated edition of the old Scottish Ballads, I am anxious, if possible, to guard myself against the charge of presumption. No such charge could be founded upon the mere fact of collection; but the task of collation is of a delicate and arduous nature, and requires no ordinary amount of study and preparation on the part of any one who attempts it. For, as the great mass of the Scottish ballad-poetry existed only in a traditionary form until a comparatively recent period, and as in the course of centuries it has undergone many inevitable alterations, and has been frequently added to and interpolated, any attempt towards its restoration must be proportionably difficult.

Here I must premise, that I use the word "restoration" in a sense which need not alarm

even the most scrupulous stickler for implicit adherence to existing versions. I have an extreme dislike to that kind of renovation which ekes out fragments by modern additions, which, however skilfully planned and executed, can only be regarded as clever imitations of the past. The architect who adds to a ruin by building round it, without more than a conjectural notion of its original extent and proportion, cannot be termed a renovator. The new pile simply detracts from the sanctity of the ancient relic; is always felt to be incongruous; and is frequently the reverse of picturesque. But, on the other hand, when a fine old building has suffered at various times from the hands of successive architects, who, in their zeal to piece it out, have added preposterous wings, thrown out staring porticoes, blocked up windows, and ruthlessly whitewashed the antique carvings and decorations, the work of restoration, by the removal of these exotics, appears to me eminently praiseworthy. It is in that sense that I use the term; and it is to that end that my labours have been directed.

I have judged it necessary to make this explanation, because the late Mr Motherwell—a poet of considerable eminence, and a faithful and enthu-

siastic collector of ballads—has, in the introduction to his "Minstrelsy, Ancient and Modern," condemned altogether the practice of collating versions; and as his opinion, in a matter of this kind, must undeniably be regarded as of weight, I shall transcribe the condemnatory passage, in order that the public may have a fair opportunity of judging from the argument. Mr Motherwell says:—

"It is perhaps unnecessary to mention, that of every old traditionary ballad known there exists what may be called different versions: in other words, the same story is told after a different fashion in one district of the country, from what it is remembered in another. It therefore not unfrequently occurs, that no two copies obtained in parts of the country distant from each other, will be found precisely to tally in their texts; perhaps they may not have a single stanza which is mutual property, except certain commonplaces which seem an integral portion of the original mechanism of all our ancient ballads, and the presence of which forms one of their most peculiar and distinctive characteristics, as contrasted with the modern ballads. Both of these copies, however, narrate the same story. In that particular, their identity with

each other cannot be disputed; but in many minute circumstances, as well as in the way by which the same catastrophe is brought out, sensible differences exist. By selecting the most beautiful and striking passages, which present themselves in the one copy, and making these cohere, as they best may, with similar extracts detached from the other copy, the editor of oral poetry succeeds in producing from the conflicting texts of his various authorities, a third version more perfect and ornate than any individual one as it originally stood. This improved version may contain the quintessence, the poetic elements of each copy consulted; but in this general resemblance to all, it loses its particular affinity to any one. Its individuality entirely disappears; and those features by which each separate copy proved its authenticity, in the collated version become faint and dubious, confused and undistinguishable."

Now it humbly appears to me that unless Mr Motherwell intended to maintain (which is a manifest absurdity), that there was a duality or plurality of each ballad from its very origin, this passage, and much more which he has written to the same effect, is no argument whatever against a judicious attempt at restoration by collating the

different versions, which are indeed, in many cases, superabundant. He is right so far, in taking exception to that mode of editing which consists in the indiscriminate selection of the best stanzas from different versions without regard to the context, but I apprehend that he is wrong in his general conclusion, which is to the effect that "it is surely the duty of the collector and editor of traditionary ballads to avoid the perilous and frequently abortive task of uniting discordant and essentially incohesive texts, and to content himself with merely selecting that one of his copies which appears the most simple and least vitiated, and to give it purely and simply as he obtained it, without hazarding any emendation whatever."

If this rule had been observed by all the collectors of traditionary poetry (setting editors for the mean time aside), it is curious to speculate upon the results. Almost every collector, who has diligently applied himself to the task of gathering together the "disjecta membra poetæ" (including Sir Walter Scott, the most illustrious of them all), has, in the course of his researches, when such a harvest was to be gathered, recovered two, three, or more versions of the same ballad, and in many cases a version of it had been printed

by a previous collector. What, then, was the finder to do? According to Mr Motherwell, he ought only to give the one version which he considered the best, omitting or flinging aside the others, notwithstanding the interest of their various renderings. But how, if the previous collector had printed what, on the whole, must be esteemed a better version than any which the late investigator had found? Was it his duty then to commit to the flames what he had gathered with so much trouble? I apprehend not. If that were so, undoubtedly the Scottish ballad-book would have been miserably shorn. If, on the other hand, each collector had printed, separately and apart, the whole of the material which he had acquired, our ballad-book would have swollen to such dropsical dimensions, that few would have cared to look upon its bloated surface. I apprehend that Mr Motherwell, in his indignation at certain malpractices, with which both Pinkerton and Allan Cunningham were undoubtedly chargeable, became too generally dogmatic: for, if collation is to be thus universally condemned, he is, in his own person, liable to the charge, as many of the pieces in his collection were made up from comparison of separate recitations.

From my earliest years I have been familiar with the traditionary poetry of my country; and I cannot say with truth that subsequent study, or an acquaintance with those compositions which rank as classics, has in any way lessened my admiration for those simple but impassioned strains. They have become, to a certain extent, the firstlings of my memory; and verses or snatches of them occur to me more readily for illustration than lines of Horace, which are commonly cited by Parliamentary speakers, or even the epigrammatic and antithetical couplets of the poets of the age of Queen Anne. Such being the case, without arguing any point of taste which might arise from that confession, I may at least plead early familiarity with the subject as an excuse for my present attempt; and I may further add, that the idea of collating and restoring, in so far as that was possible, the scattered fragments of the Scottish ballad-poetry, in a complete form, has long been present in my mind, and has at various times, when leisure permitted, occupied much of my attention. Before my attention was drawn to active literary pursuits, almost all the floating minstrelsy which time had spared had been collected by able, industrious, and venerable hands—

drawn from the great current, and piled in separate heaps—but not, as it appeared to me, properly assorted or arranged. I saw that a good deal of this material was being quietly pilfered for the purposes of transmogrification, and that various old favourites of mine had been furbished, dressed up, and exhibited to the public, with applause, as novelties; and knowing well the value of much that remained, I was not without apprehension that in the course of time the whole stock would be absorbed, to reappear in modern glitter and resonance, just as if a hidden treasure of unicorns, bonnetpieces, and Jacobuses, were to be discovered by a sly appropriator, and by him to be recast as medals bearing his own name and legend. Such always must be the case in the absence of a complete collection. I do not presume to blame the practice. The artist into whose hands an antique cameo may fall, may undoubtedly take a hint from its tracery. All I contend for is the preservation and collection of the originals. When these are brought together, and exhibited to the public eye, they are models for all coming time. Those who copy slavishly will then be judged according to their work: the chiselling may be delicate and exquisite, far excelling that of the

model; but ample means will be afforded of deciding upon the originality of the design.

There are reasons which, independently of my own inclination and desire, satisfy me that such an attempt should be made. In almost every other country in Europe, the remains of the old national poetry have been carefully brought together and consolidated. The Songs of the Cid and the Moorish romances of Spain exist to us without variations or conflicting versions. The old German ditties are preserved in the "Volkslieder der Deutschen," edited by Friedrich Karl von Erlach; and in the "Knaben Wunderhorn," published by Arnim and Brentano, a most delightful book, which, as Heine has well remarked, "contains the most beauteous flowers of the German mind;· and he who would become acquainted with the German people in their most amiable aspect, must study these traditionary songs. At this moment," says he, "the 'Wunderhorn' lies before me, and I feel as if I were inhaling the fragrance of the German linden." The Danish ballads, which in many respects bear a strong resemblance to those of Scotland, and which extend over a period of several centuries, from the thirteenth to the eighteenth, are contained in that

well-known and admirable compilation the "Danske Viser," edited by Abrahamson, Nyerup, and Rahbek. In the same way the ballads of Sweden have been collected by Adolf Iwar Arwidsson, who, so late as the year 1842, issued the third and concluding volume of his series, entitled the "Svenska Fornsänger," from the press of Stockholm. I am given to understand that the old Sclavonic poetry has been preserved and edited with equal care; but of that I cannot speak from my own knowledge, my only acquaintance with those ballads being derived from the spirited German versions given in the "Volkslieder" of the accomplished Herder. Thus the foreigner who wishes to acquire a knowledge of the early poetical literature of those nations, can at once procure a perfect and authoritative collection, which is by no means the case with regard to the Scottish ballads. These have hitherto been scattered through many volumes—some indeed common and popular, but others scarce, and one or two out of print, having been merely set in type for private circulation; and the versions which these contain are by no means uniform.

I have already said that my object is to frame as complete a collection as lies in my power of the

old ballads of Scotland; and if, of each poem, only one version was extant, the task would have been a very simple one. But it is not so. The work of collecting these ancient remains was commenced more than a century ago, under the auspices of ALLAN RAMSAY, whose merits as a poet must ever endear him to his countrymen, but who was singularly ill qualified to discharge the duty of an editor. He never felt any hesitation in altering, retouching, and adding to the old material which fell into his hands, so as to suit it to the prevalent taste of the age; thereby throwing great difficulty in the way of his successors, who have been forced again to invoke the uncertain and ever-altering aid of tradition for originals which then might have been easily preserved. His "Tea-Table Miscellany" and "Evergreen," the publication of which commenced in the year 1724, contain the fruits of his distorted labours; but another and a better channel for the publication of those interesting reliques was opened by the scheme of Bishop Percy, who in 1765 published his famous work, having secured, for the Scottish department, the able co-operation of Lord Hailes. All laud and honour be to the memory of Bishop Percy! Among the Editors of British Minstrelsy, he must ever

be ranked as "facile princeps;" even beyond Sir Walter Scott, for, without the same advantages in point of accumulated information, he transcended him in skill. And, but for Percy, I question whether Scottish poetry would have, so early, attracted the notice of the English public, or have been so heartily recognised as it is at the present time. Let those who doubt this view, recur to the pages of Churchill. The next Scottish collector, DAVID HERD, was fortunately a man of a different stamp from Allan Ramsay. He made no pretence to any skill in literary composition; but contented himself with faithfully preserving such remnants of the floating minstrelsy and song as he could procure, either from tradition or from manuscripts. No doubt he inserted a good deal which was modern, but that is easily recognised. It is a great mistake to suppose that it is an easy thing to produce such an imitation of the old ballad as shall pass muster for an original. The attempt has been often made, but almost always without success; for this reason, that the imitators are forced to employ a dialect with which they are not familiar, and to assume a certain style which is essentially different from their own. Moreover, they must be very particular in their choice of

words; avoiding modern phraseology, as well as that which is over-antiquated; because the copious use of either sort is sure to lead to detection. Persons composing in this way are compelled to give such minute attention to the diction, that the spirit escapes them. They exhibit few natural touches; they are seldom either pathetic or picturesque; and the result is a *caput mortuum*. It is difficult thoroughly to explain this, except by reference to instances; but any one who will take the trouble to study minutely the modes of expression used in three imitations which are contained in Herd's collection, viz. "Hardyknute," "Kenneth," and "Duncan," and who will moreover compare them with such genuine antiques as "The Battle of Otterburn," or "Anne of Lochroyan," cannot fail to understand my meaning. Or take the ballad of "Gil Morice," as given in Percy's Reliques, one-half of which is ancient, and the other of modern interpolation—how easy is it at once to discriminate between what is genuine and what is counterfeit.

I do not mean to say that successful imitation is impossible. There are no impossibilities in literature; and in some persons the imitative faculty is so largely developed that they might

train themselves by practice into adoption of a style not naturally their own. But that would imply more pains and labour than any one is likely to undergo for the mere sake of counterfeiting ballads; and few who have the poetical impulse strong within them would apply it thus, when even success could not add anything to their reputation. I must, however, candidly admit that there is no infallible test. It is well known that imposition of this kind has been frequently practised, for we have many instances of its detection. But we cannot confidently assert that it has never been so far successful as to set detection at defiance. The enthusiasm of collectors is apt to lead them astray; and sometimes impositions of a very daring character have been attempted. For example, the late Allan Cunningham, when a young man, communicated to Mr Cromek, as ancient, many compositions of his own, which were published in the volume entitled "Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song." The poems are really beautiful, for Cunningham was a man of remarkable genius; but they do not show the impress of antiquity, though Cromek rejoiced over them, as an antiquary might do over a casket of coins bearing to have been struck in

the days of the Heptarchy. But there may have been more careful imitators than Allan Cunningham; and considering that we have nothing to rely on except tradition, the course of which it is impossible to trace, extreme dogmatism ought to be avoided, although it is unquestionably a more venial fault than infidelity.

A few ballads recovered from recitation appeared in minor collections made subsequently to Herd's publication; but none of these require special notice. But in 1802, Sir Walter Scott appeared as a collector of the Scottish ballads, and beyond all doubt "The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border" was a splendid proof of his diligence, research, poetic enthusiasm, and vast acquirement. I observe with much regret, and, I confess, not a little indignation, that more than one subsequent editor of the ballads have insinuated a doubt as to the fidelity of Sir Walter's rendering. My firm belief, rested on documentary evidence, is that Scott was most scrupulous in adhering to the very letter of his transcripts, whenever copies of ballads, previously taken down, were submitted to *him*. As evidence, I refer to the "Song of the Outlaw Murray," printed in these volumes, of which an undoubted old copy, made out long before Sir

Walter's time, is now, through the courtesy of the representative of the Philiphaugh family, lying before me. It is not a first-class ballad; for it is far too lengthy, and in many respects might have been improved by a judicious workman: but Sir Walter has given it throughout just as he received it. That he retouched and supplemented one or two ballads which he gathered from oral tradition, is quite true; but he made no secret of that. One of the very best of the Border ballads, "Kinmont Willie," had been so mangled, as he states with perfect frankness, "that some conjectural emendations have been absolutely necessary to make it intelligible." That explanation being given, was there anything deceitful in the process? Then, with regard to collation, Sir Walter followed that course which seems to be the natural and proper one; namely, of supplying *lacunæ* in one copy from material contained in another; which, after all, has been the universal practice of editors. I confess that I have a personal interest in vindicating this practice, because several of the ballads which appear in these volumes, and which I am quite certain will be regarded as novelties even by such persons as have studied this branch of native literature, have

been framed by diligent collation of fragments, none of which, regarded separately, were of any value, or even, in some cases, intelligible. Such are "The Marchioness of Douglas," "The Duke of Atholl's Nurse," "Hynde Horn," and "Earl Richard's Wedding;" which the reader may confidently accept as ancient.

In 1806, Mr Robert Jamieson published his collection, entitled "Popular Ballads and Songs, from Tradition, Manuscripts, and Scarce Editions;" and thereby made an important contribution to the stock of ballad literature. The immediate success of this publication was not commensurate with its merits; nor did it attract nearly so much attention as the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border." Nevertheless, the versions which it contained were for the most part of high merit, derived from authentic sources, carefully collated where collation was possible, and annotated with judgment and discretion. Messrs Finlay, Kinloch, Maidment, Sharpe, and Motherwell, have since added much to the store of ballad poetry, by publishing ballads or fragments which had escaped the notice or evaded the industry of former collectors, or versions which differed materially from those already in circulation. And in 1828, Mr Peter

BUCHAN published his "Ancient Ballads and Songs of the North of Scotland," a repertory of the most curious kind, which I have found of some value in preparing the present volumes for the press. Mr Buchan was by no means particular as to the quality of his material. He took immense pains to collect every scrap of legendary song which he could find extant in Aberdeenshire and the adjacent districts, without any minute questioning as to its antiquity; and the result is a medley of the most singular kind. A few of his versions are really excellent; but for the most part they are extremely rude, being not only interpolated by fragments from other ballads, but so corrupted by additions of rugged verse as to hold out little or no attraction to the poetical reader. They are, however, of much use to an editor of the ballads, for they may be consulted with advantage in the collation of mutilated poems, and occasionally they supply stanzas which are wanting in other copies.

Ample as was the material so brought together by the labour and industry of the different collectors, there was yet another process to be performed before the Ballad-book of Scotland could be adequately restored. It was necessary

that some one should undertake the collation of the several versions, so that each fragment might be fitted in its proper place, to the exclusion, as far as practicable, of all spurious additions, and supplementary verses, which had been added to these poems during the course of tradition. The reader will keep in mind that I am now referring only to that section of the ballads of which different versions had been preserved. A great many, having been taken from old manuscripts, required no alteration—indeed, any attempt to tamper with these, even in the slightest degree, would deserve serious reprobation. Many more have been collated by one or other of the collectors; and, in such cases, it was plainly unnecessary, when the work had been satisfactorily done, to take it to pieces for the mere sake of fanciful or conjectural improvements. The ballads, so constructed, have for the most part been generally accepted and recognised, are emphatically household words, and so should be allowed to remain. But the class of ballads to which I more particularly allude, being altogether broken and fragmentary, absolutely required restoration, for reasons which I think the candid reader will admit to be sufficient, if he has sufficient patience to peruse the following

remarks, explanatory of the condition of these venerable remains.

Their number, as we have them now, without attempting to estimate the many which must have disappeared in the course of time, is a clear proof that they were not composed casually or from the caprice of the writers, but were the production of minstrels, who, in remoter times, followed their craft as a regular profession or means of livelihood —though the emoluments may have been but scanty, and the social position of the professors not very exalted. It is no shortsighted policy which suggests that the recreations of a people should be attended to as well as their physical wants; for man is a complex animal, and in the absence of all amusement to relieve the severity of his daily toil, he is apt to become sullen and morose, if not positively dangerous. The homely phrase, "All work and no play," implies a condition unwholesome alike for individuals and societies, and decidedly unfavourable to the development of the better propensities of our nature. Some modern philanthropists, who are entitled to credit for their zeal and sincerity, though we may be allowed to doubt the soundness of their philosophy and the extent of their discretion, have

opined that the best mode of recreating the people and refreshing their spirits, lies in the alternation of severe mental and bodily exercise; the hours of leisure being devoted to study, as diligently as those of labour are dedicated to the needful exercise of a handicraft. Experience, not less than common sense, is opposed to such preposterous notions; and if there is one lesson more easily deducible from the pages of history than another, it is this—that the happiness of a people is best consulted, and their contentment most easily secured, by giving them every facility for innocent and pleasant pastime. I cannot help thinking that the severe measures of the Scottish legislature, about the middle of the sixteenth century, for checking and even suppressing the sports of the commonalty, contributed largely in engendering that spirit of anarchy, disaffection, and turbulence, which, for a long series of years, gave Scotland the unenviable character of being the rudest country of Christendom.

Before that period the amusements of the people were unrestrained. In the poems of Dunbar and others, we have many glimpses of the joyous habits of the commonalty; and amongst the most favourite recreations was that of listening to the

tales of itinerant minstrels. Minstrelsy, as every one knows, was a great craft in the time of the Troubadours, some of whom, for example Bertrand de Born, were not only knightly in station, but famous for deeds in arms. At Arles there was a minstrel college, which issued poetical degrees and certificates of merit—documents which were somewhat more than testimonials of accomplishments, for they served as passports throughout Europe. This system, however, which was in full force about the time of the third crusade, soon fell into desuetude, owing to the discontinuance of the Provençal dialect as a spoken language, and to the common use of the vernacular by all classes of society in the various countries. In like manner, when the Norman-French speech was supplanted in England by the Saxon, the compositions of the Trouveres, or romancists of the North of France (the Langue d'Oeil), disappeared. Still minstrelsy flourished, retaining something of its old dignity, though indigenous subjects were substituted for the traditionary *fabliaux*, and the signs and symbols of the antique freemasonry were well-nigh forgotten.

At the courts of our earlier Scottish kings, and at the mansions of the principal nobility, some of

whom exercised, if they did not rightfully possess, little less than regal authority, minstrelsy was a favourite pastime. It has always been so with northern nations. The Celts, the Saxons, and the Danes, alike encouraged and practised it; and the subjects in which they most especially delighted were the narratives of the deeds of old, which redounded to the glory of their ancestors, and, by implication, of themselves. In those days exclusiveness was a thing unknown. Earls, barons, and chieftains feasted in the hall with their retainers, and mingled with them in their sports; and when the tables were drawn, and the minstrels called in, great was the crush to hear the last ballad of the gifted Mæonides of the district. In this way the taste for popular poetry was not only kept alive, but very widely disseminated; and the minstrel, wherever he went, be it to castle or cottage, received a ready and most hospitable welcome.

So, as I understand the matter, were the earlier ballads framed—for recitation sometimes, sometimes to be sung, according to the capability of the minstrel; for it is quite evident, both from the construction of the verse, and from statements and allusions made by old writers, that they were

not invariably accompanied by music. It was a pleasant and a wholesome amusement for the people—better, I venture to think, than the perusal of political or sectarian tracts, falsified representations of society as it exists in this world, and bigoted exhortations to the renunciation of Christian charity as a fit preparative for the next. It is curious to remark how ancient customs ever and anon force themselves, despite of what is called progress, into new existence. At the very time when I am preparing these sheets for the press, no entertainments are so popular as those given by Mr Charles Dickens, who reads or recites his own admirable compositions to delighted audiences. Once again, and in an age when such a contact might have been deemed least likely to occur, the minstrel (for such he truly is who can touch every chord of emotion), and the audience have been brought together face to face, and the charm of delivery has been superadded to that of skilful composition.

I could say a great deal more upon the subject of the early position of the minstrel-craft, both in Scotland and elsewhere; but I am apprehensive that such remarks, if prolonged, might be tedious. I tender them as an explanation of the origin of

the ballads, which I do not regard as mere casual compositions, dictated by the fancy of individuals who had a natural taste for poetry, or an ambition for making themselves known as men of superior capacity in a small and obscure circle, but as professional works, undertaken both for livelihood and fame, which must ever have some connection. Be it remembered that, before the invention of printing, fame was a livelihood. Posthumous renown, the comfort of modern disappointed poetasters, was then a thing undiscovered. The poet had then a living, sentient, and sensitive audience to address; and if he could not stir, influence, or inspire them, there was not even a phantom of a tribunal to which he could carry his appeal.

The many variations which occur in the rendering of the Scottish ballads seem to me to require consideration. It would appear that a metrical form of composition has always been adopted in rude ages, as the best vehicle for transmitting story or legend unimpaired and unaltered from one generation to another. An incident communicated in prose, which is the ordinary speech of mankind, may be traditionally preserved and transmitted with tolerable correctness as regards the facts, but not so as regards the language, each succes-

sive narrator telling the story in his own way, and using his own words. But a metrical tale is framed for the express purpose that *the words themselves* may be transmitted; and it is with that view that all the ornaments proper to poetry are introduced. Not only the story, but the words of the story, are to be handed down; and this can only be accomplished by the aid of numbers, cadence, and felicitous expression, so framed as to be riveted in the memory. When books become abundant and accessible, the mnemonic effort is discontinued; but until that period arrives, the popular stories of a nation must be perpetuated by tradition, and a metrical form is by far the best adapted for their preservation. It is hardly necessary to insist upon a point so obvious; or to multiply instances from the well-known practice of the Rhapsodists, the Druids, the Sennachies, or the Scalds.

But the language of a people is never perfectly fixed. Like everything human, it undergoes many vicissitudes and changes. Some words in the course of time become obsolete; others lose their direct and primary significance; and new words and new forms of speech are gradually introduced. There is, in truth, no such thing as a fixed standard; although, after the production of a con-

siderable stock of literature which has passed into circulation, the changes are comparatively few. But, prior to that, the changes are numerous and rapid. Compare the English of Shakespeare with that of Chaucer—what a wonderful difference, irrespective of the mere spelling, is at once apparent in the vocabulary!

Now, it seems to me quite evident that such changes in the spoken language must have affected the floating traditionary literature also. The reciters, supposing them to be perfectly faithful, had an evident inducement to alter terms so as to suit the comprehension of their audience; in short, to modernise. This will account for many changes and varieties of words and epithets, which have puzzled critical writers, and in some instances led them astray. Thus I find that the antiquity of the ballad of Sir Patrick Spens has been challenged, because in some versions the lords are made to wear "cork-heeled shoon;" which, say the critics, were unknown at so early a period as that assigned as the date of the ballad. Very possibly they may be right as to the date of the manufacture; but not on that account can we accept their conclusion, more especially when there are other current versions which do not

contain the obnoxious phrase. Moreover, a perfectly accurate memory is among the rarest of gifts. Every writer who has attempted to quote from memory is aware of this. Let him be ever so well acquainted with the passage, he will find, on comparison with the original, that in jotting it down he has altered something; and where there is no written or printed original to consult, there is the less motive for fidelity. I think, therefore, that even in the ballads which were least altered or corrupted there must have been many verbal changes, to the extent of modifying and modernising the phraseology, though the sense may be left intact. When I find two or more sets of the same ballad which exhibit no more than variations of this sort, I hold these variations to be intrinsic proofs of its purity, and also conclusive evidence of the antiquity of its tradition.

But there are many ballads in which the variations are more decided and perplexing. Sometimes the commencement of the story, and even its main incidents, are narrated in language nearly uniform; while the catastrophe in the one version differs altogether from that set forth in the other. In such a case it is plain that one at least of the conclusions must have been the work of a subse-

quent artist, and it becomes necessary to scrutinise very closely the tone, texture, and style of the parts, in order to determine which version should receive the honours of originality. It may happen, however, and I suspect it often is the case, that both the conclusions are comparatively modern—that part of the ballad had been altogether lost, and that, in order to supply that loss, different ballad-mongers had exercised their ingenuity. The art of replacing is by no means a new one. The minstrels and reciters were adepts in supplying *lacunæ;* and they could do so much more successfully than any artist of the present day, seeing that their memories were stored with innumerable lines and even stanzas, which, with a little dexterity, could be made to fit in and assort with almost any kind of ballad. Such ballads are nevertheless to be considered as antique. They may have been repaired, but the repairs are of ancient date, within the period of active minstrelsy; and as we certainly would not reject or even undervalue a Roman bust, because some broken part had been replaced in the time of the Cæsars, so neither should we set aside as spurious a ballad the catastrophe of which has been supplied by the hands of a professional reciter.

Occasionally, however, we meet with versions of a ballad differing so materially from one another throughout, that, but for the coincidence of certain stanzas, we should be led to suppose that they had no common origin. My theory with regard to these compositions is as follows :—Each reciter or minstrel had a stock of ballads peculiarly his own, some probably acquired from tradition, but others of his own invention. As he earned his livelihood by reciting these, he was naturally most unwilling to impart them to others —such generosity being, in fact, equivalent to handing over a share of a copyright. But he could not prevent other minstrels from carrying away in their memory snatches of his song, along with the general outline of his story or tale; and I am satisfied that, in many cases, new versions were fabricated out of such material. This hypothesis will serve to account for the marked diversity of the versions current in the northern, from those which are floating in the southern districts of Scotland. I can very well understand why a Selkirkshire minstrel should have been chary of appropriating any part of the strains especially belonging to a tuneful brother of Dumfries. They were travellers in the same circuit, and often

appeared before the same audiences; and immediate detection, and I doubt not disgrace, would have followed any act of larceny. Even mendicants in the olden times had their peculiar and recognised rounds, and it was a point of honour with them to abstain from interfering with their fellows. But the case was very different when considerable distances intervened. The minstrel from the braes of Yarrow, who made an expedition to Deeside, was in point of fact engaged in a sort of poetical foray. If he could pick up a story or a fragment of verse from the recitations of a professional practitioner of Aberdeen, he thought it neither sin nor shame to appropriate these, and to turn them to account as so much valuable addition to his own trading capital. No injury was sustained by the Aberdonian, who had an audience of his own, from whom he exacted small tithes; whilst positive delectation was afforded to the indwellers of the Border by the introduction of a new ballad to vary the monotony of those with which they were already familiar. In no other way does it seem possible to account for such very marked discrepancies pervading whole versions of a ballad, with the exception of a few links; and I submit that this explanation is not

only plausible, but is founded on strong internal evidence.

Still more was larceny practised when the story was of foreign framing — in other words, when it belonged to England. To make spoil of an English ditty was accounted perfectly fair: but the mere act of conveyance and appropriation did not suffice. It was necessary to recast the ballad in the Scottish dialect, and to give it a new locality, and sometimes names, so as to render it more agreeable to a northern audience; and while engaged in the work of reconstruction, the minstrel, as a matter of course, would give full scope to his ingenuity, and would use every means in his power to render the disguise effectual. Nor was this a one-sided practice only; for the English minstrels were in the habit of helping themselves freely from the stores of Scottish poesy. I have no doubt that several of the ballads included in the following series were originally English — in particular I would specify "Lord Beichan," "Earl Richard," and "The Border Widow's Lament." As a set-off to these, I think we may fairly consider the following ballads, which are current in England, "The Three Knights," "The Outlandish Knight," and "The West-country Wager," as altered versions of "Fine Flowers i' the Valley," "May Col-

lean," and "The Broomfield Hill." I am also inclined to give England credit for "Hugh of Lincoln," claiming for Scotland, in return, an original right of property in "The Heir of Linne." It is possible that, if thorough restitution were to be made, the exchange would be on a much larger scale; but the above instances are sufficient to show that, independent of the pure Border ballads, a good deal of popular poetry has passed from England into Scotland, and *vice versâ*, and in the process of time has become acclimated in the soil of transference.

Very puzzling, too, are the frequent interpolations of stanzas from other ballads. When these occur, I do not consider them by any means sufficient proof of deliberate fabrication. Many of these stanzas were, as I have already said, poetical commonplaces, the general property of the reciters, who used them to fill up gaps in the narrative, and sometimes, no doubt, for the purpose of relieving the constant strain upon the memory. The "bonny boy," who almost invariably acts as messenger, and whose mode of progress is thus described,—

"And when he came to the broken brigg,
He bent his bow and swam;
And when he came to the grass growing,
Set down his feet and ran;

> And when he came to the high castle,
> He neither did chap nor ca',
> But set his bent bow to his breist,
> And lightly lap the wa' "—

this active youth, I say, was not the poetical property of any one minstrel or reciter, but was a goblin or sprite whom all were entitled to evoke in case of necessity. In my version of "Gil Morice," I have made him proceed more demurely, not from any puritanical desire to restrain his gambols, but because, according to the text, he was on that occasion provided with a horse. Of like ubiquity and convenience was the stately old father, who invariably appeared in the hour of the heroine's distress—

> "Then up and spake her father dear,
> Says, 'What's needs a' this din?'"

And so was it with the sympathising sister, the accommodating bower-woman, and even the "wylie parrot," who, with human understanding and tongue, played the part of the Greek chorus in its cage. These were simply ballad materials available for the use of all. In like manner, the constant repetitions, effected by making the words of the answer tally precisely with those of the question, are to be regarded as conventional rests employed by the

reciters as aids to delivery, corresponding in some degree to the stereotyped compound epithets which are so abundant in the Homeric poems. There were also certain endings or final verses which the minstrels might employ at pleasure. Of these by far the most common was—

> "They buried him in St Mary's kirk,
> And her in St Mary's quire;
> And out of her grave grew a bonnie red rose,
> And out of the knight's a brier."

So terminate several of the romantic ballads, at least in the ordinary and popular versions. It is proper to make a distinction between the use of this recognised material and that of deliberate interpolations, which are by no means uncommon. I am satisfied that the reciters had no scruple, on occasion, in blending together two separate ballads, composed on subjects similar in kind, so as to produce a stronger effect; and, in consequence, it is the duty of a modern editor to use the utmost care and discrimination in his attempts at restoration. So far from his being tempted to add anything, he has to guard himself against the opposite fault of cancelling or excising too much—at least that is my feeling and impression. I have done so freely, whenever I have satisfied myself

that extraneous matter, which I could trace as belonging to other ballads, has been introduced; though I have abstained from deleting stanzas which are evidently of ancient composition, simply because they may appear superfluous to the story. But I have exercised no such restraint with modern interpolations, which for the most part are easily recognisable. I cannot, indeed, venture to affirm that I have got rid of them all, for the origin of some is only doubtful, and others are necessary interpolations to connect parts of the story; but I venture to think that very few traces of modern workmanship will be observed in the following collection.

These remarks may serve to explain many of the variations which occur in the rendering of the Scottish ballads. The reader should, moreover, keep in mind that the expression and even the sentiments of a ballad must inevitably undergo alteration according to the nature of the channel through which it passed. We are entitled to presume that some individuals of the minstrel or reciting class were superior both in taste and accomplishment to others. In their hands a poem may have undergone no deterioration—nay, it may even have been considerably improved; but a fine

poem, intrusted to a sorry reciter who could command only an inferior audience, would no doubt be adapted to their capacity and associations, and be lowered in its tone. But on this subject I have probably said enough. The marvel is, that we can still show so many fine ballads upon such a variety of subjects, considering the many changes which have taken place in Scotland since the period of their production.

A word or two with regard to some of the marked characteristics of the Scottish ballad-poetry may not be inappropriate.

A large portion of these ballads was undoubtedly composed previous to the Reformation; and in many of them we find traces of the prevailing mode of worship. Thus there are frequent references to the mass, to the virtue of holy water, and to the power of bells; but, on the whole, the allusions to religious ceremonies are less numerous than we might expect. But, on the other hand, they disclose a vast extent of popular superstition. In "Tamlane" and "True Thomas" we have the apparition of the Queen of Elfin, that mysterious feudatory of hell, whose temptations and delusions were made matter of evidence before the Presbyteries long after the downfall of the Church of

Rome—who was supposed to have carried away from the field of Flodden our own valiant King James, not slain but wounded, as Arthur had been conveyed by fairy hands to the vale of Avalon. Then there are the apparitions of the dead, whose repose in the grave has been disturbed, either because they have still to expiate some deadly sin, or because they have to recover their troth, or because they are disquieted by the voice of heavy mourning. Most beautiful, indeed, and pathetic is the manner in which these visitations are narrated. The "Wife of Usher's Well," in her agony for the loss of her sons, rebels against the chastisement of God, and lo—

"It fell about the Martinmas,
When nights are lang and mirk,
The carline wife's three sons cam' hame,
And their hats were o' the birk.

It neither grew in syke nor ditch,
Nor yet in ony sheugh;
But at the gates o' Paradise,
That birk grew fair eneugh."

And so they remain till morning, seemingly living men, with the mother sitting by the bedside, until the arrival of the appointed hour.

"'The cock doth craw, the day doth daw,
The channerin' worm doth chide;
Gin we be miss'd out o' our place,
A sair pain we maun bide.'

'Lie still, lie still but a little wee while,
Lie still but if we may;
Gin my mother should miss us when she wakes,
She'll go mad ere it be day.'"

Not less touching is the poetry in the second part of "Clerk Saunders," and other ballads of the same stamp; to which I must refer the reader, for I am conscious that it is not my part here to assume the garb of the critic.

One very curious feature is the frequent introduction in the romantic ballads of communications made by birds. The parrot of "May Collean" was a fowl of shrewdness and discretion; but the bonny bird who, in the ballad of "Young Huntin," reveals the murder, was conscientious in the extreme, and moreover proof against temptation. Another warns the mother of "Johnie of Braidislee" that her son is lying wounded in the forest; whilst "The Gay Goss-hawk" shows itself superior to any page in the delivery of a message. This singular machinery, however, is not exclusively confined to the ballad poetry of Scotland.

I find the like in the popular poetry of other nations; and nowhere is it more lavishly used than in the Romaic ballads.

I trust that the reader will pardon not only my prolixity, but the digression from my more immediate topic; which was the assumed duty of an editor to proceed by way of collation, when various versions of the same ballad were submitted to his notice. Perhaps it was not necessary to have dwelt so long upon that point; because I find that, in almost every instance, when the collectors have had two or more copies in their hands, they have followed the same course. But I am really anxious, for many reasons, that the process which I have adopted in framing this collection should be thoroughly understood; as I would not willingly underlie the charge of having tampered with the Scottish ballads. As a proof of my good faith and intention, I have stated in every instance the sources from which my materials were taken; and wherever I have added or altered a line or a stanza, (which I have never done except when there was a clear omission or mistake), I have made acknowledgment of it in the preface to the particular ballad.

As I have thought it necessary to explain thus

minutely the course which I have adopted, and as I have already referred by name to the principal collectors of the ballads, I am bound to state that I am not the first editor of this branch of national minstrelsy. In the year 1829, my friend Mr Robert Chambers gave to the public a collection of the Scottish ballads, framed very nearly on the same principle as mine. The merits of that collection are so well known and generally acknowledged, that it would be superfluous for me to say anything in further commendation of the zeal, industry, and taste of the accomplished editor. Indeed, had his labours been more extended, I should have regarded the field as preoccupied, and have avoided the risk of being considered an intruder. But my friend's collection was limited to eighty ballads, whereof twelve were modern or imitations, leaving only sixty-eight of undoubted antiquity. The number of ballads contained in the present volumes extends to one hundred and thirty-nine, all of which are ancient, or at least have been considered as such by adequate judges. Much more recently an excellent collection, under the title of "The Book of Scottish Ballads," was edited by Mr Alexander Whitelaw; and I can bear cordial testimony to

its accuracy and comprehensiveness. It differs, however, from the present compilation in two important points. In the first place, Mr Whitelaw has not confined himself to the republication of the ancient ballads, but has inserted a vast number of imitations and modern pieces. In the second place, he has not made any attempt at collation, but in several instances has reprinted the different versions which had been taken down from recitation. I am so far from objecting to this, that I regard the latter as a very valuable feature of his collection, inasmuch as the student of ballad poetry has the advantage of finding, within the compass of one volume, the various readings which previously were scattered throughout many. I ought also to mention that a very good selection of ballads, which had previously been printed, was issued in 1815 by Mr John Gilchrist of Edinburgh. It is limited in extent, but was carefully edited; and besides ballads, it contains many curious specimens of Scottish humorous poetry. Mr David Laing's unique volume, "Select Remains of the Ancient Popular Poetry of Scotland," issued in 1822, contains few ballads, but is otherwise an excellent and valuable contribution to our stock of ancient native literature.

As to the real literary merit of the old Scottish ballads there may be difference of opinion. Indeed, it would hardly be fair to characterise them in the aggregate, for they are not all the productions of the same age, and they belong to separate districts of the country. The Border ballads are widely different in their tone, spirit, and even rhythmical formation, from those of the far north; and could we with any degree of certainty assign dates to their composition, I am satisfied that we should find them in some measure influenced by external events. But I consider all speculation upon that subject as vain. Except in the case of some historical ballads, and others which refer to well-known events, we have no clue to guide us. Tradition, which has preserved for us the verse, is dumb as to its origin.

It should always be remembered that these ballads were essentially the property of the people, and were not composed to be read, but to be recited or sung. Hence, perhaps, their popularity, which is sufficiently vouched for by the fact that they have been so wonderfully preserved. The high and heroic war-chant, the deeds of chivalrous emprise, the tale of unhappy love, the mystic songs of fairy-land, all have been

handed down to us for centuries, little mutilated and almost unchanged, in a profusion which may be deemed marvellous when we reflect upon the great historic changes and revolutions which have agitated the country. For such changes, though tending essentially towards the production of the ballad, especially in the historical department, cannot possibly be favourable to its preservation; and no stronger proof of the intense nationality of the people of Scotland can be found than this—that the songs commemorative of our earlier heroes have outlived the Reformation, the union of the two Crowns, the civil and religious wars of the Revolution, and the subsequent union of the kingdoms, and, at a comparatively late period, were collected from the oral traditions of the peasantry.

It is curious to reflect that the traditionary process, by gradually altering the language or dialect of the ballads, has effected their preservation and maintained their popularity; whereas the old written Scottish poetry, owing to the difficulty of construing it, is now very much neglected. It is a great mistake to suppose that polished poetry was not produced in Scotland until a comparatively recent period. The fact is quite otherwise;

for poetry, as an art, was cultivated in Scotland as early as in England, and with even greater perseverance. The first great English poet, Geoffrey Chaucer (and great indeed is his name, and beyond comparison with others during the lapse of centuries), completed his "Canterbury Tales" in the year 1383. The first classical Scots poet, John Barbour, Archdeacon of Aberdeen, finished his poem of "The Bruce" in the year 1375. It would be absurd to institute a comparison between Chaucer and Barbour—the former being one of the greatest poets of the world, whereas the latter, though far above mediocrity, had not the power or the genius of the grand patriarch of British poetry, and can only rank as the best inspired of the rhyming chroniclers. Cotemporary with Barbour was Andrew Winton, Prior of St Serf's, author of the "Original Chronicle of Scotland"—a work which bears in many respects a strong resemblance to the "Roman de Rou" of Robert Wace, an Anglo-Norman poet who lived in the reign of Henry II. After Winton came the Minstrel, commonly called "Blind Harry," whose famous poem of "Wallace" long enjoyed a high degree of popularity in Scotland. In England, however, the example of Geoffrey

Chaucer was not speedily followed. With him, or at least with his immediate successor Lydgate, the poetical glory of England went to sleep, and was only partially awakened, after the lapse of nearly two centuries, by the Italianised ditties of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey. But, in the interval, Scotland produced several very distinguished poets, to whose works I shall now refer. The foremost of these was James I. of Scotland, whose poem of "The King's Quhair" remains to us a monument of his genius.

James, as is well known, was made a prisoner by Henry IV. of England when on his passage to France, and was detained for nineteen years in Windsor Castle. He was a mere boy at the time of his arrest; and Henry, perhaps conscious of the dishonourable nature of his own conduct, and willing to make some amends, took pains to have him well educated. The young prince made rapid progress in his studies, and soon began to display a marked talent for poetical composition. His taste was of course formed by the perusal of the works of the English poets, Chaucer, and John Gower, Shakespeare's personified prologue, to whom indeed he has acknowledged his obligation:

"Unto impugning of my masters dear,
Gower and Chaucer, that on the stepés sate
Of rhetoric, while they were living here,
Superlative as poets laureate,
In morality and elegance ornate,
I recommend my book in linés seven,
And eke their souls into the bliss of heaven." *

"The King's Quhair" is a poem of considerable length, in which James narrates the circumstances of his capture and imprisonment, and the emotions awakened in his bosom by the apparition of Lady Jane Beaufort walking in the castle garden. This portion of the poem has been so often quoted, that I prefer transcribing a few specimen stanzas from the vision, which the royal poet has introduced, descriptive of the Court of Venus.

* I should here explain that in this and the subsequent quotations from the older Scottish poets, I have, for the greater ease of the reader, adopted the modern method of spelling, except where, for the sake of the rhythm, the accents require to be marked. As this can be done, in almost every instance, without altering the language, I think it preferable to the antiquaries' habit of adhering *literatim* to the original spelling; the more especially as, without such aid, very few people can understand the meaning. To the great majority of readers, Gawin Douglas's translation of the Eneid, as printed in the folio edition of 1710, must be wholly unintelligible.

" And in a chaír of estate beside,
With wingés bright, all pluméd but his face,
There saw I sitting the blind god Cupíd,
With bow in hand, that bent full ready was ;
And by him hung three arrows in a case,
Of which the headés grounden were full right
Of divers metals, forgéd fair and bright.

And with the first that headed is of gold
He smités soft, and that has easy cure ;
The second was of silver, many fold
Worse than the first, and harder aventúre ;
The third of steel is shot without recure :
And on his longé yellow lockés sheen,
A chaplet had he all of leavés green.

And in a rétreat, little of compáss,
Depainted all with sighés wonder sad,
Not such sighés as heartés do menace,
But such as doeth lovers to be glad,
Found I Venús upon her bed, that had
A mantle cast over her shoulders white ;
Thus clothed was the goddess of delight.

Stood at the door Fair Calling, her ushér,
That could his office do in cunning wise,
And Secrecy, her thrifty chamberer,
That busy was in time to do servíce ;
And other moe that I cannot advise.
And on her head of red roses full sweet,
A chapelet she had, fair, fresh, and meet.

With quaking heart astonied of that sight,
Unethis* wist I what that I should sayn;
But at the last feebély as I might,
With both my handés on my knecés twain,
There I begouth† my carés to complain,
With ane humblé and lamentable cheer,
Thus sálute I that goddess bright and clear."

Here not only the versification but the phraseology are essentially English, unlike anything which had hitherto appeared in Scotland, but very closely resembling the style and expression of Chaucer. This, in the absence of all other evidence, would be of itself sufficient to convince me that the humorous but coarse poem called "Christ's Kirk on the Green," was not the composition of James I., but of some writer of a later period, who had been exclusively bred in Scotland, and who was familiar, from his youth upwards, with the habits, peculiarities, and language of the lower orders.

The example of polish thus set by James I. had undoubtedly a great effect upon the manner of subsequent poets. I think there are traces of it in the compositions of Robert Henryson, a writer of the age of James II., of whose personal history we know little, but who certainly was a man of

* Scarcely. † Began.

considerable genius. Although his phraseology is peculiarly Scottish, it is evident that he had studied the writings of Chaucer, as well as of King James I., and had moulded his versification accordingly. Of this a brief example may suffice, as my present object is not to estimate the poetical merit of these early masters, but simply to show how carefully and successfully the arts of composition were then studied in Scotland. I now quote from the Prologue to Henryson's "Fables."

"In midst of June, that jolly sweet seasón,
When that fair Phœbus, with his beamés bright,
Had dryéd up the dew from dale and down,
And all the land made with his lemés * light.
In a morníng, between mid-day and night,
I rose, and put all sloth and sleep aside,
Untill a wood I went alone, but † guide.

Sweet was the smell of flowers white and red,
The noise of birdés right delicious,
The boughés broad blooméd above my head,
The ground growing with grasses gracious;
Of all pleasaunce that place was plenteous.
With sweet odóurs and birdés harmony,
That morning mild, my mirth was more for they.

The roses red arrayéd rone and ryss, ‡
The primrose and the purpure viola;

* Radiance. † Without. ‡ Bush and twig.

To hear it was a point of paradise,
Such mirth the mavis and the merle couth ma,*
The blossoms blithe broke up on bank and brae,
The smell of herbés, and of fowls the cry,
Contending who should have the victory.

Me to conserve then from the sunés heat,
Under the shadow of a hawthorn green,
I leanéd down amongst the flowérs sweet,
Syne made a cross and closéd both mine eyne;
On sleep I fell among the boughés bene,†
And in my dream methought came through the shaw,
The fairest man before that e'er I saw."

Those who are versed in ancient Scottish literature will observe, that in this extract there is an evident tendency towards that old alliterative system which prevailed before the time of Barbour, and which even Gawin Douglas has seen fit occasionally to employ. But there is great beauty in the verse, and much delicacy in the expression. We have no reason to suppose that Henryson, who was schoolmaster at Dunfermline, had ever travelled from Scotland; therefore his writings are an excellent mark of the progress of the poetical art up to the year 1450, which, from internal evidence, may be taken as the date of their composition.

* Could make. † Pleasant.

I am tempted to insert one other composition by this remarkable poet, whose "Fables," which hitherto have existed only in manuscript, are, I understand, to be shortly printed under the superintendence of Mr David Laing. The sentiments embodied in the following poem, not less than its felicitous expression, may well command our admiration:—

THE ABBAY WALK.

"Alone as I went up and down
In ane abbay was fair to see,
Thinking what consolatioun
Was best in all adversitie;
On case I cast aside mine e'e,
And saw this written on a wall—
In what estate, man, that thou be,
Obey, and thank thy God for all.

Thy kingdom and thy great empire,
Thy royalty, nor rich array,
Shall not endure at thy desire,
But, as the wind, will wend away;
Thy gold, and all thy goodés gay,
When fortune list will fra thee fall
Sin' thou sic samples sees ilk day,
Obey, and thank thy God for all.

Job was most rich, in writ we find
Tobée most full of charitee;
Job waxed poor, and Tobée blind
Baith tempted with adversitie.

Sin' blindness was infirmitie,
And povertie was natural,
Right patiently baith he and he
Obey'd, and thanked God for all.

Though thou be blind or have an halt,
Or in thy face deformed ill,
So it come not through thy default,
No man should thee reprief by skill.
Blame not thy Lord, so is His will ;
Spurn not thy foot against the wall ;
But with meek heart and prayer still
Obey, and thank thy God for all.

God of His justice maun correct,
And of His mercy pity have ;
He is ane Judge, to nane suspect,
To punish sinful man and save.
Though thou be lord attour the lave,*
And afterward made bound and thrall,
A poor beggar with scrip and stave,
Obey, and thank thy God for all.

This changing and great variance
Of earthly statés up and down,
Comes neither through fortune nor chance,
As some men says without reasoun,
But by the great provisioun
Of God above that rule thee shall ;
Therefore thou ever make thee boune
To obey, and thank thy God for all.

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* Above the rest.

In wealth be meek, height not thyself;
Be glad in woeful povertie;
Thy power and thy warldly wealth
Is nought but very vanitie.
Remember Him that died on tree,
For thy sake tasted the bitter gall,
Who has low hearts and lawés hie,
Obey, and thank thy God for all."

Henryson's distinguished successor was William Dunbar, whom some Scottish writers, from what I must call an excess of enthusiasm, have not hesitated to compare with Chaucer. I am certainly not of that opinion; nevertheless I recognise in Dunbar—a man of extraordinary accomplishment and versatility—a true poet in thought, and a skilled poet in expression. He was a student at the University of St Andrews, where he took the degree of Master of Arts in 1479, and he seems to have travelled in his youth as a novitiate of the Franciscan order. Afterwards he was employed in some diplomatic business, and thus was frequently in England and on the Continent. He, too, acknowledged his obligation to the English bards, and that most heartily.

"O reverend Chaucer, rose of rhetors all,
As in our tongue a flower imperial,
That rose in Britain ever! Who reads right

Thou bear'st of 'makers' the triumph royál;
Thy fresh enamell'd terms celestial,
This matter could illumin'd have full bright.
Wast thou not of our English all the light,
Surmounting every tongue terrestrial,
As far as Mayés morrow does midnight?

O moral Gower, and Lydgate laureate!
Your sugar'd lips, and tongués aureate
Been to our earés cause of great delight:
Your angel mouthés most mellifluate
Our rude languáge has clear illuminate,
And fair o'er-gilt our speech that imperfyte
Stood, or your golden pennés shaped to write.
This isle before was bare, and desolate
Of rhetoric, or lusty fresh indite."

This is really a remarkable passage, inasmuch as it asserts a community of dialect for polished composition throughout the whole of Britain, and, by implication, a renouncement of the Scottish peculiarities of phraseology. The expression, "our English," is very significant, and in the case of Dunbar was no mere figure of speech. For, except in humorous compositions, he has studiously avoided the use of distinctive Scottish terms and phrases; and therefore any student of Chaucer can read the graver poems of Dunbar without encountering the slightest difficulty. I give an extract from "The Thistle and the Rose," a poem

which celebrates the nuptials of James IV. with the Princess-Royal Margaret of England.

" Then all the birdés sung with voice on height,
Whose mirthful sound was marvellous to hear ;
The mavis sang—Hail, Rose, most rich and right
That does upflourish under Phœbus' sphere !
Hail, Plant of youth ! Hail, Prince's daughter dear !
Hail, blossom breaking of the blood royál,
Whose precious virtue is imperial !

The merle she sang—Hail, Rose of most delight !
Hail, of all flowers queen and sovereign !
The lark she sang—Hail, Rose both red and white,
Most pleasant flower, of mighty colours twain !
The nightingale sang—Hail, nature's suffragene
In beauty, nurture, every nobleness,
In rich array, renown, and gentleness.

The common voice uprose of birdés small
Upon this wise—O blessed be the hour
That thou wast chosen to be our principal !
Welcome to be our Princess of honóur,
Our pearl, our pleasance, and our paramour,
Our peace, our play, our plain felicity ;
Christ thee conserve from all adversity !

Then all the birdés sung with such a shout,
That I anon awoke where that I lay,
And, with a braid, I turnéd me about
To see this court ; but all were went away.
Then up I leanéd, halflings in affray,

Call'd to my Muse, and for my subject chose
To sing the royal Thistle and the Rose."

It is an old and just observation, that poetry, more than any other kind of composition, tends to purify a language. But the process necessarily must be slow, inasmuch as no sudden changes can be made in the spoken language of a nation. The more ambitious poems of Dunbar were never popular in Scotland, for this reason, that they were not adapted for the taste and comprehension of the people. They were so elaborate in finish, and so Anglican in language, that they were regarded as foreign compositions. The vocabulary of Scotland was then widely different from that of England, and of course any kind of poetry, in which terms familiar to the common ear were studiously avoided, could not be greatly successful. Of this Gawin Douglas, Bishop of Dunkeld, the poet who immediately followed Dunbar, was quite aware; and, accordingly, he pursued a different method.

Although his writings are little studied at the present day, and may hereafter, for lack of competent readers, pass into entire oblivion, I cannot refrain from expressing my opinion, that Gawin

Douglas was the very Prince of the purely Scottish poets. None of the others had such a command of language, such a singularly felicitous choice of epithets, or such a power of vivid and forcible description. By far his most remarkable work is the translation of the Eneid,

"Written in the language of the Scottish nation,"

remarkable as being the earliest British version of a Latin classical poet, unsurpassed as yet by any subsequent effort. There is a prologue to each book, and these display wonderful versatility of talent and original genius. But, unfortunately for the duration of his fame, Douglas wrote in a dialect which has now become obsolete; a large proportion of the words cannot be understood without reference to a glossary; and his mode of spelling is so antiquated, that even words which are now in use appear unintelligible in his pages. For example, how many readers could at one glance comprehend the meaning of the following lines?—

"At every pylis poynt and cornes croppis
The teicheris stude, as lemand beriall droppis,
And on the halesum herbis, clene but wedis,
Like cristall knoppis or small siluer bedis:

The licht begouth to quenschying out and fall,
The day to dirken, declyne and deuall:
The gummis risis, doun fallis the donk rym,
Bayth here and thare skuggis and schaddois dym:
Vp gois the bak with hir pelit leddren flicht."

The difference between this dialect and that which is presently used throughout Britain for literary compositions, is greater than now exists between the Dutch and the German languages. But it should be remembered that in those days, and until a much later period, there were no arbitrary rules for orthography either in England or in Scotland; nor was there any recognised system of grammar. Every man wrote according to his fancy or design; and it was the design of Douglas to write for the improvement of the generation to which he belonged. In that he fully succeeded, for by common consent he is acknowledged as the man who gave the first great impulse to classical learning in Scotland. His language, as I have said, is for the most part pure Scots, and therefore interesting to the philologer, as it shows how little of the Norman ingredient then entered into the Scottish speech. Indeed, Lisle, in the Preface to his "Ancient Monuments in the Saxon Tongue," says that he

improved more in the knowledge of Saxon by the perusal of Douglas's "Virgil," than by that of "all the old English he could find, poetry or prose; divers of which were never yet published; because it was nearer the Saxon and further from the Norman."

It would be a great error, however, to infer from what I have said, that Bishop Douglas wrote in a vulgar dialect, used only by the peasantry or others of the lower orders. He wrote in the ordinary speech of Scotland, as it might have been heard at the Court—in the dialect which was commonly used in the north, and which continued to be used, although with gradual modification, down to the time when the crowns of England and Scotland were fortunately united. The modern Scots dialect, or speech of the peasantry, is but diluted Saxon compared with that of Gawin Douglas. But still, when adapted to the uses of poetry by such a consummate master as Burns, it has an unexpressible charm; nor do I think that, as a living vehicle for song, it will utterly decay from the land, and lose its popularity, if recent writers, who use that dialect, could only be persuaded that vulgarisms are always to be avoided.

The following extract will, I think, be sufficient to give the reader an impression of the peculiar style of Gawin Douglas. It is taken from the prologue to the *thirteenth* book of the Eneid (the supplement composed by Mapheus Vegius), and is descriptive of an evening in June. I have modernised the spelling so far as to render the passage intelligible to every reader.

"Toward the even, amid the summer's heat,
When in the Crab Apollo held his seat,
During the joyous monéth time of June,
As gone near was the day and supper done,
I walkéd forth about the fieldés tyte,
Which then replenish'd stood full of delight,
With herbs, and corn, and cattle, and fruit-trees,
Plenty of store, birdés, and busy bees,
In emerald meadows flying east and west,
After labóur to take the nightė's rest.
And as I lookéd on the lift * me by,
All burning red 'gan wax the evening sky;
The sun enfiréd whole, as to my sight,
Whirl'd about his ball with beamés bright,
Declining fast toward the north indeed;
And fiery Phlegon, his dim nightés steed,
Douked † so deep his head in floodés gray
That Phœbus rolls down under hell alway;
And Hesperus, in the west, with beamés bright,
Upspringeth, as fore rider of the night.

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* Firmament. † Submerged.

Amid the haughs, and every lusty vale,
The recent dew beginneth down to skale,*
To meis † the burning where the sun had shined,
Which then was to the nether world declined.
At every pylé's ‡ point, and cornés crops,
The teicheres § stood, as clear as beryl drops,
And on the wholesome herbage, clean from weeds,
Like crystal knobs, or like small silver beads.
The light began to quenchen out and fall,
The day to darken, décline, and devall ;‖
The gums ¶ arise, down falleth the dank ryme,**
Both here and there come out the shadows dim.
Up goes the bat with her peel'd leathern flight,
The lark descendeth from the skyé's height,
Singing her complene song after her guise,
To take her rest, at matin hour to rise.
Along the hilltops swim the sopes †† of mist,
The night forth spread her cloak with sable list;
That all the beauty of the fructuous field
Was with the umbrage of the earth o'erheil'd. ‡‡
Both man and beast, firth, flood, and woodés wild,
Involved in the shadows were insyled; §§
Still were the fowls that fly within the air,
All store and cattle settled in their lair,
All creatures, wheresoe'er them liketh best,
Are boune to take the wholesome nighté's rest,
After the dayé's labour and the heat:
Close were they all, and at their soft quiet,

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* Scatter. † Allay. ‡ Tops of grass.
§ Dew-drops; from the French, *tacher*, to spot.
‖ Descend. ¶ Mists. ** Hoar dew.
†† Trailing clouds. ‡‡ Covered over. §§ Encompassed.

No stirrage or removing, he or she,
Either beast, bird, fish, fowl by land or sea,
And, shortly, everything that doth repair
In firth or field, flood, forest, earth, or air;
Or in the thickets, or the bushes rank,
The lakes, the marshes, or their poolés dank.
All settled, lying still to sleep and rest,
Be the small birdés sitting in their nests,
The little midges and the irksome flies,
Laborous emmets, and the busy bees;
As well the wild as the tame bestial,
And every other thing both great and small,
Except the merry nightingale Philomene,
That on the thorn sat singing from her spleen."

It would be inexcusable if I were to omit from the catalogue of early Scottish poets the name of Sir David Lyndsay, not less renowned from his satirical compositions than from his more elaborate efforts. I give three stanzas from his poem of the "Dream."

"I met Dame Flora in dule weed disguised,
Which into May was dulce and delectable;
With stalwart storms her sweetness was surprised,
Her heavenly hues were turnéd into sable,
Which umquhill * were to lovers amiable.
Fled from the frost the tender flowers I saw
Under Dame Nature's mantle lurking low.

The small fowlés in flockés saw I flee,
To Nature making lamentation;

* Formerly; corresponding to *whilom*.

They lighted down beside me on a tree,
Of their complaint I had compassion;
And with a piteous exclamation,
They said, Blessed be Summer with his flowers,
And waryit* be thou, Winter, with thy showers!

Allace, Aurora! the silly lark 'gan cry,
Where hast thou left thy balmy liquor sweet,
That us rejoiced, we mounting in the sky?
Thy silver drops are turnéd into sleet;
Of fair Phœbus where is thy wholesome heat?
Why tholest thou† then thy heavenly pleasant face
With misty vapours to be obscured, allace?"

It is somewhat remarkable that none of these poets (with the exception of Henryson, whose "Bluidy Serk" I have included in my collection) seem to have made any attempts at the composition of ballads. That such ditties were very numerous and highly prized, even by the court circle, is a fact established by the strongest evidence. In his "Lament for the Death of the Makars," a poem written by Dunbar in his old age, we find the following stanza:—

"That scorpioun fell hes done infek
Maister Johne Clerk and James Afflek,
Fra *ballat-making* and trigidé,
Timor mortis conturbat me."

Mr Tytler, in his excellent "History of Scotland," after making some comments upon the

* Accursed. † Why dost thou permit.

older written poetry of the North, writes thus regarding the minstrels:—

"Besides these higher poets of established excellence and fixed habitation, there can be no doubt that Scotland, from an early period, produced multitudes of errant minstrels, who combined the characters of the bard and the musician; and, wandering with their harp from castle to castle, sang to the assembled lords and dames those romantic ballads of love and war which formed the popular poetry of the day. It was impossible, indeed, that it could be otherwise. The Gothic tribes which, at a very early period, possessed themselves of the Lowlands; the Saxons and Northumbrians who dwelt on the Border; the Scandinavians or Norwegians, who for several centuries maintained possession of the islands, and of Ross and Caithness; and the Normans, whose original love for romantic fiction was cherished by their residence in France, were all passionately addicted to poetry. They possessed a wild imagination, and a dark and gloomy mythology: they peopled the caves, the woods, the rivers, and the mountains, with spirits, elves, giants, and dragons; and are we to wonder that the Scots, a nation in whose veins the blood of all those

ancient races is mingled, should, at a remote period, have evinced an enthusiastic admiration for song and poetry; that the harper was to be found amongst the officers who composed the personal state of the sovereign, and that the country maintained a privileged race of wandering minstrels, who eagerly seized on the prevailing superstitions and romantic legends, and wove them, in rude but sometimes expressive versification, into their stories and ballads, who were welcome guests at the gate of every feudal castle, and beloved by the great body of the people? . . . .

"It seems to have been a custom in Scotland, as old at least as Alexander the Third, that when the sovereign made his progress through the country, minstrels and singers received him on his entrance into the towns, and accompanied him when he took his departure; and we find Edward the First, in his triumphal journey through the land in 1296, paying certain sums of money as a remuneration for the same melodious reception. Whether Bruce himself was a proficient in music, the favourite accomplishment of many a knight in those days, is not known, but he undoubtedly kept his minstrels; and we have already seen that, upon the marriage of David his son to the

Princess Joanna of England, there is an entry in the accounts of the Great Chamberlain, which shows that the royal nuptials were cheered by Scottish and English minstrelsy, and that the minstrels of the King of England, having accompanied their youthful mistress into her new dominions as far as Dunbar, were there dismissed with a largesse of four pounds from the King. At the coronation of David the Second, the minstrels again make their appearance; and from the higher sums which are then given, it may be conjectured that a more numerous band had attended upon this joyous occasion than at the nuptials at Berwick. They are presented with twenty pounds by the King, and receive ten from his consort. There can be no doubt that in many instances these minstrels, besides being harpers or musicians, who sang and recited the popular poetry of the country, were themselves poets, who composed extemporaneous effusions, or in more frequent instances altered some well-known ditty of love or war, to suit the taste, and, by a skilful change of name, to flatter the family pride of the feudal baron in whose hall they experienced a welcome. It is difficult, unless we admit the existence of some such system of poetic economy, to account

for the perpetual recurrence of the same individual stanzas, or at least of the same expressions, in many of our oldest ballads, and the reappearance of the same tale, with only a slight change of incident, and alteration of the names of the actors.* We know, from authentic evidence, that there were *gests* and historic ballads written upon the story of Wallace, and that, upon the occurrence of any great national event or victory, the genius of the country broke into songs, which the Scottish maidens used to sing. A single stanza of a Scottish ballad, composed after the defeat of the English at Bannockburn, has been preserved in the 'St Alban's Chronicle.' 'For he,' says the monkish author, speaking of Edward the Second, 'was djscomfited at Banocksborne; therefore the maydens made a song thereof in that countree on Kynge Edward, and in this manere they singe:—

"Maydens of Englonde, sore may ye morne,
For ye have lost your lemmans at Banocksborne,
With havelogh;

* As I have already stated my opinion upon this point very fully, I shall not again advert to it. The reader will at once perceive wherein I differ from Mr Tytler, and I am not shaken by his authority, though I readily admit that any view preferred by so accomplished a man, and so erudite an antiquarian, is entitled to serious consideration.

What! wenyth the Kinge of Englonde
To have got Scotland,
With rombelogh."

"In Bower's additions to the Scotichronicon, written about 1441, he mentions, with a contempt which is ill concealed, that the vulgar crowd in his own day were much delighted with tragedies, comedies, ballads, and romances, founded on the story of Robin Hood and Little John, which the bards and minstrels used to sing, in preference to all others of the same kind of compositions. These popular songs and ballads, of which we can merely trace the existence,* were, in all probability, written by the minstrels and harpers, who not only crowded the castles of the great, but roamed over the country, and were welcome guests at every cottage-door. Nor is it difficult to ascertain the cause why nearly every trace and relic of these ancient ballads has now perished. The clergy of those remote days were the only men who committed anything to writing; and it is certain that the clergy were the bitter enemies of the minstrels, whom they considered as satirical rivals and intruders, who carried off from the Church the money

* Two Scottish ballads upon the subject of Robin Hood will be found in this Collection.

which might have been devoted to more pious and worthy uses. They talk of them as profligate, low-bred buffoons, who blow up their cheeks, and contort their persons, and play on horns, harps, trumpets, pipes, and Moorish flutes, for the pleasure of their lords, and who, moreover, flatter them by songs and tales and adulatory ballads, for which their masters are not ashamed to repay these ministers of the prince of darkness with large sums of gold and silver, and with rich embroidered robes."

But the most curious information regarding the minstrels and reciters is contained in the books of the Lord High Treasurer in the reign of James IV., which are still preserved in the General Register House of Edinburgh. Some extracts from these books have already been printed in the Appendix to Mr Dauney's elaborate work, "Ancient Melodies of Scotland;" but Mr Joseph Robertson, whose knowledge of the antiquarian Scottish lore is most profound, but who is no miser of it, has furnished me with more copious extracts, which I now subjoin.

A.D. 1489.

Item [on Corpus Cristi day] to Cunnynghame, the singar, at the Kingis commande, a demy, . xiiij s.

Item [the first da of Julij] to Wilyeam sangstar of Lythgow, for a sang bwke he brocht to the King, be a precep, ... x li.

A.D. 1490.

Item [the xxvij da Aprill] at the Kingis commande, to Blinde Hary, ... xviij s.

A.D. 1491-2.

Item on Newyerisda, the first da of Januar, to Blind Hary, ... xviij s.
Item [the v° Aprill] to Blind Hary, . xviij s.
Item til a harper, ... xviij s.
Item [the ix° Aprill] to Wallass, that tellis the geistis to the King, ... xviij s.
Item [the xix° Aprill] to Martyn clareschaw and the toder Ersche clareschaw, at the Kingis command, ... xviij s.
Item [the xxix° Nouembris] in Edinbrught, to Wallas, that tellis the tayllis, to pass with lettres for the Lordis Gray, Glammis, and Olyfant, ...
Item, on Moninda the ij° Januar, to Schir Thomas Galbreytht,* Jok Goldsmytht,† and Crafurd, for the singyn of a ballat to the King in the mornyng, iij vnicornis, ... ij li xiiij s.
Item to Blind Hary, . . . ix s.
Item to Martyn M'Bretue clareschaw, . x s.
Item til ane oder Ersche clareschaw, . v s.

A.D. 1496.

Item [the xxv day of Aprile] to James Mylsom, the harpare, ... xiij s. iiij d.
Item [the secund day of Maij] to Bennet the fythelar, ix s.

* Sir Thomas Galbraith was a churchman. He was employed to illuminate writings, and to paint the cloth which covered Mons Meg in 1497.

† John Goldsmith was "King of Bere" in the Court-revels of 1496. He had charge of the King's organs.

Item to Wallas the tale-teller, . . ix s.
Item [the xxiiij day of Maij in Striuelin] to ij wemen that sang to the King, . . . xiiij s.
Item [the xxj day of Junij] to tua wemen that sang to the King, ... xiiij s.
Item [in Sanct Johnstoun] on Mydsomer day, to William, lutare, . . . xiij s. iiij d.
Item [the xxix day of Junij] giffin to Guilliam and Johne Pais, tawbronaris, . . . xiiij s.
Item [the ix day of Julij] to Lundoris, the lutare, at the Kingis command, . . . xiiij s.
Item [the x day of Julij] to Jacob, the lutare, at the Kingis command, . . . xiiij s.
Item [the xvij day of Julij] to John of Wardlaw, the lutare, ... xviij s.
Item [the thrid day of August] giffin to the harper with the a hand, ... ix s.
Item [the sevint day of December] to Johnne Jamesom, for a lute to the King, . . vj s. viij d.
Item [the ix day of December] to Widderspune, the foular, that tauld talis and brocht foulis, to the King, ... vj s. viij d.
Item [the xij day of December] to Watschod the tale-tellar, and Widderspune the tale-tellar, togidder, ... xviij s.
Item to Jacob, the lutar, at the Kingis command, ... xv s. vj d.

A.D. 1497.

Item [the xxv day of Februar] giffin to Sowlis, the harpar, at the Kingis command, . xiiij s.
Item that samyn day to Bennet the fithelar, at the Kingis command, . . . ix s.

Item that samyn day to Jame Rudman, at the Kingis command, to by him a lute, . . ix s.

Item [the xiij day of Merch] giffin to Dauid Hay and a lutar in Sanct Johnstoun, . . xviij s.

Item that samyn day to a man that playit on the clarscha to the King, . . . vij s.

Item [the xxviij day of Merch] to thir menstralis, giffin for thar Pasch reward, in the first to Thom Pringil and his broder trumpatouris, xxviij s. Item to Will Carrik and Pete Johnne, trumpatouris, xxviij s. Item to Adam Boyd, fithelar, and Mylstom the harpar, xxviij s. Item Bennet, fithelar, and Sowlis the harpar, xxviij s. Item to Jacob, lutar, at the Kingis command, xxviij s. Item to Guilliam and Paiss, tawbronaris, and ane spelare with thaim, xxvj s. Item, to Widderspune, that brocht wild foulis * to the King, xiiij s. Item, to Pate, harpar, ix s. Item to Lundoris, the lutar, ix s. Item to Ansle, the tawbronare, ix s.

Item [the x day of Aprile] to Johnne Hert, for bering of a pare of monicordes of the Kingis fra Abirdene to Striuelin, ... ix s.

Item to Johnne, harpar with the ane hand, at the King is command, . . . ix s.

Item the xviij day of April [in Striuelin] giffin to ane man and ane woman that sang to the King, be the Kingis command, . . . x s.

Item [the xix day of Aprile, in Striuelin] giffin to twa fithelaris, that sang Graysteil to the King, ix s.

Item [the xxiij day of Aprile] at the Kingis command, giffin to Widderspune the fowlar, and for fowlis and tales telling, ... xviij s.

* He was also tale-teller, and as such was included in the list of minstrels.

Item [the fift day of Maij] to the brokin-bakket fitular in Sanctandris, ... ix s.
Item [the xix day of December] in Fowlis in Anguss, to the harpar thair, at the Kingis command, xiiij s.

A.D. 1498.

[Januar] . . . . . in the Stobhall, to ane lutar, at the Kingis command, ... ix s.
Item [the xxj day of Februar in Striuelin] at the Kingis command to Sande Harpar, . xiij s. iiij d.
Item that samyn day giffin to Watschod the tale-tellar, ... ix s.
Item [the xxij day of Februar] in Dowquhale, to the harpar, at the Kingis command, ...
Item [the xix day of Merch in Dunbertane] to the man that playit to the King on the clarscha, be the Kingis command, ... xiiij s.
Item [the thrid day of Aprile in Quhithern] to yong Rudman, the lutar thair, at the Kingis command, xj. s. viij. d.

A.D. 1503.

Item [the viij day of Julij] for ane lute and ane pair of monocordes, brocht hame to the King be William Brounhill, quhilk cost in Flandris xlv s. gr. et; and giffin tharfor, ... vj li. xv d.
Item the xvij day of September, to the cruk[illegible]t vicar of Drumfreis, that sang to the King in Lochmabane, be the Kingis command, ... xiiij s.
Item to ane woman that sang to the King thair, xiiij s.
Item [the v day of October] to the Quein's lutar, xxviij s.
Item [the xj day of October] to the sowtar lutar [in Sanct Johnstoun], ... ix s.

Item [the xxvij day of Nouember] to twa wemen that sang to the King at the Quhyt Kyrk, . xiiij s.
Item [the xj day of October] to Mylsòn, harpar in Scone, be the Kingis command, . . . xiiij s.
Item the xv day of October, in Brechin, to the foure Italien menstrales and the More taubroner to thar hors met, ... xlv s.
Item that samyn nycht in Dunnottar to the cheld playit on the monocordes, be the Kingis command, xviij s.
Item the xx day of October, in the Canonry of Ross, to Johnne Goldsmytht for tursing of the organis to Tayne and hame againe, . . . iiij lib.
Item to the foure Italien menstrales and the More taubroner to thar hors met, . . xlv s.
Item [the xxij day of October] to the Lard of Balnagownis harpar, be command, . . xiiij s.
Item [the xvij day of Nouember] to the Countess of Craufurdis harpar, . . . xiiij s.

A.D. 1504.

Item [the fyrst day of Januar] to thir menstrales vnderwritten: In the first to the Queins lutar, iiij lib. iiij s. Item to the foure Italien menstrales, lvj s. Item to the More tabroner, xxviij s. Item to Thomas Hopringill elder and younger, Johnne Trumpet, Alexander Cuschlaw, and Pete Johnne, iiij li. iiij s. Item to Anshle Guilliam and the taubroner that passit in Denmerk, the taubroner of the kechin, and Portuouss taubroner, iij li. x s. Item to James Mylson, Alexander Harpar, Boneamentur, Pate Harper, clarscha, and his sone, iij li. x s. Item to Adam Boyd, Moffet, fithlaris; Robert Rudman, Adam Dikson, lutaris; Hog, tale-tellar; Jame Widderspune, and other twa strange menstrales with tham, v li. xij s.

Item to the twa piparis of the toun of Edinburgh, xxviij s.
Item [the xxiiij day of Januar] to ane tale-tellar that tellit tales to the King, . . . ix s.

These are very curious extracts, and throw much light upon the disputed question as to the degree of estimation in which popular traditionary poetry was held at that period of our history. From them we find that Blind Harry, the chronicler of Wallace, who must then have been in extreme old age, was a regular stipendiary of the gallant and accomplished King, who fell in the midst of his chivalry at Flodden. Then there are payments to "Wallas," the professional reciter or tale-teller, "that tells the gests to the King." To "Widderspune the fowler, that told tales," and to Watschod the tale-teller—to two fiddlers that sung "Graysteil" to the King—to Hog, the tale-teller —besides numerous gratuities to minstrels, harpers, luters, fiddlers, songsters, trumpeters, performers on the clairshach, organ, monocorn, and all kinds of instruments—and to such notable characters as "the broken-backed fiddler in St Andrews," and "the crooked vicar of Dumfries, that sung to the King in Lochmaben." I remember well when that "mother of the guns," Mons

Meg, was brought back to the Castle of Edinburgh, with all the honours of the pibroch; but I was not then aware of the fact that, before Flodden was fought, that venerable piece of ordnance had rolled down the ancient streets of Dunedin, preceded by "menstrallis that playit before Mons doun the gate." I doubt whether the Court of good King René of Provence was more minstrel-haunted than that of James IV. of Scotland.*

These extracts are, I think, quite sufficient to explode the notion that the minstrel-craft, before the period of the Reformation, was despised or held in low account in Scotland. John Mair, who, under the Latinized name of Major, published a treatise, "De Gestis Scotorum," thus speaks of Blind Harry: "In the days of my childhood, Henry, a man blind from his birth, composed a book on the exploits of Sir William Wallace. Collecting such stories as were then current among the people, he set them forth in popular rhyme, of

* Two later entries, which occur in the year 1508, have a strange appearance. "Item, to Wantonnes that the King fechet, and gert her sing in the quenis chamer, xiij s."—"Item, to Wantones and her twa marrowes that sang with hir, xiij s." Was Sir Walter Scott aware of the existence of these documents when, in "Marmion," he drew the picture of Lady Heron, who sings the romance of the "Young Lochinvar?"

which art he was a master. Such tales, however, I only believe in part. But by the recitation of these stories before the great (*coram principibus*) he earned his food and raiment, which, indeed, he well deserved." Blind Harry's poem is undoubtedly one of great merit; but its extreme length and uncouth phraseology have rendered it now less popular than it was some sixty years ago.

I do not think that there are many old Scottish ballads still in recitation which have not been taken down or printed. A few may linger in remote districts of the country; indeed I have more than once heard fragments recited which evidently belonged to the ancient minstrelsy, but which I failed to recognise as parts of any known composition. But that generation to whom story-telling and recitation were, in early youth, the substitutes for reading, has now passed away. No Elspats of the Craigburnfoot remain to repeat to grandchildren that legendary lore which they had acquired in years long gone by from the last of the itinerant minstrels; so that we may fairly conclude that whatever portion of the poetical harvest the reapers in the traditionary field failed to gather in, has ere now perished. I have been most desirous to make this collection a complete one; and I ven-

ture to think that in it will be found every known extant ballad composed previous to the Union of the Kingdoms, which can fairly be said to have real intrinsic merit, and which is not, from its subject or otherwise, liable to objection. I frankly own that I have so far exercised the editorial right of censorship, as to exclude, on account of their painful and peculiar nature, two or three ballads, which had found their way into previous collections; as also a few which, being coarse in expression, are not otherwise valuable. But with these exceptions, I have brought together all the traditionary poetry of this class which I consider to be authentic.

In most previous collections the ballads have been assorted and arranged in groups, according to their nature, as Historical, Romantic, or Humorous. This has often a tedious effect upon the reader, as many ballads—for example, those peculiar to the Border—bear a strong similarity, both in subject and diction; and if massed together, the great charm of variety, which even in a collection or compilation is of much importance, is sure to be sacrificed. If it were possible to arrange the ballads in the order of their composition, or in that of the events to which they

refer, I certainly should have adopted that method; but there are no certain data by which the relative antiquity of these poems can be determined; and a great many of them being altogether fanciful in subject, they cannot be arrayed in strict chronological order. Such ballads as have clear reference to history, I have kept for the most part in sequence, but not entirely so, owing to the exigencies of printing; and I have endeavoured to arrange the material in such a way, that the reader who for the first time takes up the Ballads of Scotland, may not complain of lack of variety, while those who are already familiar with a portion, may easily find their old favourites by reference to the Index.

In the notes prefixed to the ballads, I have acknowledged my obligations to the literary friends who have lent me their aid, or supplied me with information during the progress of this work; and I again take this opportunity of expressing my sincere thanks for the ready kindness they have shown me.

EDINBURGH, *June* 1858.

THE BALLADS OF SCOTLAND.

SIR PATRICK SPENS.

THERE has been much diversity of opinion as to the historical event upon which this ancient and extremely popular ballad was founded. Some have maintained that it refers to the expedition sent in 1290 to bring home the Maid of Norway, heiress of the Scottish throne, after the death of her father, Alexander III. This view may be dismissed as quite irreconcilable with the main facts of the ballad. Others think that it has reference to the marriage of James III. with the Princess of Denmark and Norway. I consider that view also to be untenable; because it is evident, from the context of the ballad, that the mission of Sir Patrick Spens, whatever that may have been, was accomplished when he reached Norway. In Bishop Percy's version, which was copied verbatim by Herd, there is no mention of Norway; but in all the others—and they are numerous—it is indicated as the country to which the voyage was made. The most common rendering of one verse is as follows:—

"To Noroway, to Noroway,
To Noroway o'er the faem;
The King's daughter *of* Noroway,
'Tis thou maun bring her hame."

This certainly gives some countenance to the idea that the expedition was that which took place in the reign of James III.; but I apprehend that the third line ought to be read thus:—

"The King's daughter *to* Noroway;"

otherwise we must suppose either that the Princess was lost in the vessel when it foundered, or that Sir Patrick Spence had quitted Norway without fulfilling the purpose of his mission.

I am clearly of opinion, with Mr Motherwell, that the ballad refers to the fate of the Scottish nobles who, in 1281, conveyed Margaret, daughter of Alexander III., to Norway, on the occasion of her nuptials with King Eric. According to Fordun, the Abbot of Balmerino and many nobles were drowned on their return home. This view has been opposed by antiquaries, on the ground that Spens is not an early Scottish name. In this, however, they are mistaken; for I find the name of Malisius de Spens in a charter of Robert III., and those of William and John de Spens in charters of the Regent Albany, about a century after the date assigned by Fordun; and, earlier than that, a remarkable shot was made by William of Spens, at the siege of the castle of Dunbar in 1336. Wyntoun thus relates it in his Chronicle:—

"And as they bicker'd there a' day,
Of a great shot I shall you say,
For that they had of it ferlie,
It here to you rehearse will I.
William of Spens percit a blasoun,
And through threefold of habergeoun,
And the actoun thro' the third ply,
And the arrow in the body."

It is true that the name of Sir Patrick Spens is not mentioned in history; but I am able to state that tradition has preserved it. In the little island of Papa Stronsay, one of the Orcadian group, lying over against Norway, there is a large grave or tumulus, which has been known to the inhabitants, from time immemorial, as "The grave of Sir Patrick Spens." The Scottish ballads were not early current in

Orkney, a Scandinavian country; so it is very unlikely that the poem could have originated the name. The people know nothing beyond the traditional appellation of the spot, and they have no legend to tell. Spens is a Scottish, not a Scandinavian name—is it, then, a forced conjecture, that the shipwreck took place off the iron bound coast of the northern islands, which did not then belong to the Crown of Scotland? "Half owre to Aberdour" signifies nothing more than that the vessel went down half-way between Norway and the port of embarkation.

THE King sits in Dunfermline toun,
Drinking the blude-red wine;
"O whaur shall I get a skeely skipper,
To sail this ship of mine?"

Then up and spake an eldern knight,
Sat at the King's right knee;
"Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailor
That ever sailed the sea."

The King has written a braid letter,
And seal'd it with his hand,
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spens
Was walking on the sand.

"To Noroway, to Noroway,
To Noroway o'er the faem;
The King's daughter to Noroway,
It's thou maun tak' her hame."

The first line that Sir Patrick read,
A loud laugh laughed he,
The next line that Sir Patrick read,
The tear came to his e'e.

"O wha is this has done this deed,
This ill deed done to me,
To send us out at this time o' the year
To sail upon the sea?"

They hoisted their sails on a Monday morn,
Wi' a' the haste they may;
And they hae landed in Noroway
Upon the Wodensday.

They hadna been a week, a week,
In Noroway but twae,
When that the lords o' Noroway
Began aloud to say—

"Ye Scotismen spend a' our King's gowd,
And a' our Queenis fee."
"Ye lie, ye lie, ye liars loud,
Sae loud's I hear ye lie!

"For I brought as much o' the white monie,
As gane my men and me,
And a half-fou o' the gude red gold,
Out owre the sea with me.

"Be't wind or weet, be't snaw or sleet,
Our ship shall sail the morn."
"Now ever alack, my master dear,
I fear a deadly storm.

"I saw the new moon late yestreen,
Wi' the auld moon in her arm;
And I fear, I fear, my master dear,
That we shall come to harm!"

They hadna sail'd a league, a league,
A league but barely three,
When the lift grew dark, and the wind blew loud
And gurly grew the sea.

The ropes they brak, and the top-masts lap,
It was sic a deadly storm;
And the waves came o'er the broken ship,
Till a' her sides were torn.

"O whaur will I get a gude sailor
Will tak' the helm in hand,
Until I win to the tall top-mast,
And see if I spy the land?"

"It's here am I, a sailor gude,
Will tak' the helm in hand,
Till ye win to the tall top-mast,
But I fear ye'll ne'er spy land."

He hadna gane a step, a step,
A step but barely ane,
When a bolt flew out of the gude ship's side,
And the salt sea it cam' in.

"Gae, fetch a web of the silken claith,
Another o' the twine,
And wap them into the gude ship's side,
And let na the sea come in."

They fetched a web o' the silken claith,
Another o' the twine,
And they wapp'd them into the gude ship's side,
But aye the sea came in.

O laith, laith were our gude Scots lords
To weet their leathern shoon,
But lang ere a' the play was o'er,
They wat their heads abune.

O lang, lang may the ladies sit,
Wi' their fans into their hand,
Or e'er they see Sir Patrick Spens
Come sailing to the land.

O lang, lang may their ladies sit,
Wi' their gowd kaims in their hair,
A' waiting for their ain dear lords,
For them they'll see nae mair.

Half owre, half owre to Aberdour,
It's fifty fathom deep,
And there lies gude Sir Patrick Spens,
Wi' the Scots lords at his feet.

TAMLANE.

THE following version of this curious old fairy ballad differs materially from that inserted by Sir Walter Scott in the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border," which contained a number of verses avowedly modern, and others which I strongly suspect to have been interpolated at a much earlier period. I have excised all doubtful stanzas — I venture to think to the decided improvement of the ballad — and I have added nothing for which I have not warrant in other versions. In the task of collation I have derived much assistance from a fragment given by Mr Maidment, in a little volume entitled "A New Book of Old Ballads," which was printed at Edinburgh in 1843, for private circulation.

The ballad belongs to Selkirkshire, and is of undoubted antiquity, being mentioned in the "Complaynt of Scotland," printed at St Andrews in 1549.

"O I forbid ye, maidens a',
That bind in snood your hair,
To come or gae by Carterhaugh,
For young Tamlane is there."

Fair Janet sat within her bower,
Sewing her silken seam,
And fain would be at Carterhaugh,
Amang the leaves sae green.

She's prink'd hersell, and preen'd hersell,
By the ae light o' the moon,
And she's awa to Carterhaugh,
As fast as she could gang.

She hadna pu'd a red red rose,
A rose but barely three,
When up and starts the young Tamlane,
Says "Lady, let a-be!

"What gars ye pu' the rose, Janet?
What gars ye break the tree?
Or why come ye to Carterhaugh,
Without the leave o' me?"

"O I will pu' the flowers," she said,
"And I will break the tree;
For Carterhaugh it is my ain,
I'll ask nae leave of thee."

He took her by the milk-white hand,
And by the grass-green sleeve,
And laid her down upon the flowers,
Nor ever asked her leave.

"Now ye maun tell the truth," she said,
"A word ye maunna lie;
O, were ye ever in haly chapel,
Or sained in Christentie?"

"The truth I'll tell to thee, Janet,
A word I winna lie;
I was ta'en to the good church-door,
And sained as well as thee.

"Randolph, Earl Murray, was my sire,
Dunbar, Earl March, was thine;
We loved when we were children small,
Which still you yet may mind.

"When I was a boy just turned of nine,
My uncle sent for me,
To hunt, and hawk, and ride with him,
And keep him companie.

"There came a wind out of the north,
A sharp wind and a snell,
And a dead sleep came over me,
And frae my horse I fell;
The Queen of Fairies she was there,
And took me to hersell.

"And never would I tire, Janet,
In fairy-land to dwell;
But aye, at every seven years,
They pay the teind to hell;
And I'm sae fat and fair of flesh,
I fear 'twill be mysell!

"The morn at e'en is Hallowe'en;
Our fairy court will ride,
Through England and through Scotland baith,
And through the warld sae wide,
And if that ye wad borrow me,
At Miles Cross ye maun bide.

"And ye maun gae to the Miles Moss,
Between twelve hours and one,
Tak' haly water in your hand,
And cast a compass roun.'"

"And how shall I ken thee, Tamlane?
And how shall I thee knaw,
Amang the throng o' fairy folk,
The like I never saw?"

"The first court that comes along,
Ye'll let them a' pass by;
The neist court that comes along
Salute them reverently.

"The third court that comes along
Is clad in robes o' green,
And it's the headcourt of them a,'
And in it rides the Queen.

"And I upon a milk-white steed,
Wi' a gold star in my crown;
Because I am a christened man
They give me that renown.

"Ye'll seize upon me with a spring,
And to the ground I'll fa',
And then you'll hear an elrish cry
That Tamlane is awa'.

"They'll turn me in your arms, Janet,
An adder and a snake;
But haud me fast, let me not pass,
Gin ye would be my maik.

"They'll turn me in your arms, Janet,
An adder and an aske;
They'll turn me in your arms, Janet,
A bale that burns fast.

"They'll shape me in your arms, Janet,
A dove, but and a swan:
And last they'll shape me in your arms
A mother-naked man:

Cast your green mantle over mè—
And sae shall I be wan!"

Gloomy, gloomy was the night,
And eerie was the way,
As fair Janet, in her green mantle,
To Miles Cross she did gae.

There's haly water in her hand,
She casts a compass round;
And straight she sees a fairy band
Come riding o'er the mound.

And first gaed by the black, black steed,
And then gaed by the brown;
But fast she gript the milk-white steed,
And pu'd the rider down.

She pu'd him frae the milk-white steed,
And loot the bridle fa';
And up there raise an elrish cry;
"He's won amang us a'!"

They shaped him in fair Janet's arms
An aske, but and an adder;
She held him fast in every shape,
To be her ain true lover.

They shaped him in her arms at last
A mother-naked man,
She cuist her mantle over him,
And sae her true love wan.

Up then spake the Queen o' Fairies,
Out of a bush o' broom:

"She that has borrowed young Tamlane,
Has gotten a stately groom!"

Up then spake the Queen o' Fairies
Out of a bush of rye:
"She's ta'en away the bonniest knight
In a' my companie!

"But had I kenned, Tamlane," she says,
"A lady would borrow thee,
I wad hae ta'en out thy twa grey e'en,
Put in twa e'en o' tree!

"Had I but kenned, Tamlane," she says,
"Before ye came frae hame—
I wad hae ta'en out your heart of flesh,
Put in a heart o' stane!

"Had I but had the wit yestreen
That I hae coft this day,
I'd hae paid my kane seven times to hell,
Ere you'd been won away!"

THE BATTLE OF OTTERBURN.

THIS noble old ballad celebrates the achievement of James Earl of Douglas, who, in the year 1388, led an army into England, and worsted, in single combat, beneath the walls of Newcastle, Henry Percy, the redoubted Hotspur. On this occasion the adversaries were parted; but Douglas retained possession of Percy's spear and pennon, which he brandished aloft in triumph, shouting that he would carry it to Scotland and plant it in his castle of Dalkeith. Percy, with a deep oath, swore that he would regain it or die. Accordingly, when the Scots, on their return home, were encamped at Otterburn, about twenty miles from the frontier, they were assailed by the English army, which had followed hard upon their rear. The forces on either side appear to have been nearly equal; and the fight which ensued was one of the most desperate on record. It ended in the discomfiture of the English, Hotspur being taken prisoner; but the victory was dearly purchased by the death of the brave Earl of Douglas, who fell when the combat was at its height. His last words were an order to continue the battle, and to conceal his death from his followers, so that an old prophecy, to the effect that a dead Douglas should win a field, might be accomplished.

The issue of the Battle of Otterburn was sorely felt for a very long period by the English; and their minstrels circulated a ballad (to be found in "Percy's Reliques") in which the defeat is slurred over, and a broad averment made that Sir Hugh Montgomerie (ancestor of the Earl of Eglintoun) was taken prisoner. The real fact is that Sir Hugh made Hot-

spur his prisoner, carried him to Scotland, and, by way of ransom, made him pay for the building of the castle of Penoon, in Ayrshire.

The variations in the rendering of this ballad are unusually few and immaterial. I have taken the liberty of omitting one or two stanzas, which seem to me to have been interpolated by reciters, and which rather detract from than add to the effect of the poem.

IT fell about the Lammas tide,
When muirmen win their hay,
That the doughty Earl of Douglas rade
Into England to fetch a prey.

And he has ta'en the Lindsays light,
With them the Gordons gay;
But the Jardines would not with him ride,
And they rue it to this day.

Then they hae harried the dales o' Tyne,
And half o' Bambrough-shire,
And the Otter-dale they burned it haill,
And set it a' on fire.

Then he came up to New Castel,
And rode it round about:
"O who is the lord of this castel,
Or who is the lady o't?"

But up and spake Lord Percy then,
And O but he spake hie:
"It's I am the lord of this castel,
My wife is the lady gay."

"If thou art the lord of this castel,
Come down and fight with me;
For ere I cross the Border fells,
The tane of us shall dee."

He took a long spear in his hand,
Shod with the metal free;
And forth to meet the Douglas then,
He rade richt furiouslie.

But O how pale his lady looked
Frae aff the castle wa',
As down before the Scottish spear
She saw proud Percy fa'!

"Had we twa been upon the green,
And never an eye to see,
I wad hae had you, flesh and fell,
But your sword shall gae wi' me."

"Now gae up to the Otterburn,
And bide there dayis three,
And gin I come not ere they end,
A fause knight ca' ye me!"

"The Otterburn is a bonnie burn,
'Tis pleasant there to be;
But there is nought at Otterburn
To feed my men and me.

"Yet I will stay at the Otterburn,
Where you shall welcome be;
And, if ye come not at three dayis end,
A fause lord I'll ca' thee."

"Thither will I come," Earl Percy said,
"By the might of our Ladye!"
"There will I bide thee," said the Douglas,
"My troth I plight to thee!"

They lichted high on Otterburn,
Upon the bent sae broun;
They lichted high on Otterburn,
And pitched their pallions doun.

And he that had a bonnie boy,
He sent his horse to grass;
And he that had not a bonnie boy,
His ain servant he was.

Then up and spake a little boy,
Was near of Douglas' kin—
"Methinks I see an English host
Come branking us upon!

"Nine wargangs beiring braid and wide,
Seven banners beiring high;
It wad do any living gude,
To see their colours fly!"

"If this be true, my little boy,
That thou tells unto me,
The brawest bower o' the Otterburn
Shall be thy morning fee.

"But I hae dreamed a dreary dream,
Ayont the Isle o' Skye,—
I saw a deid man win a fight,
And I think that man was I."

He belted on his gude braid-sword,
And to the field he ran;
But he forgot the hewmont strong,
That should have kept his brain.

When Percy with the Douglas met,
I wot he was fu' fain:
They swakkit swords, and they twa swat,
Till the blude ran down like rain.

But Percy wi' his gude braid-sword,
That could sae sharply wound,
Has wounded Douglas on the brow,
That he fell to the ground.

And then he called his little foot-page,
And said—"Run speedilie,
And fetch my ae dear sister's son,
Sir Hugh Montgomerie.

"My nephew gude!" the Douglas said,
"What recks the death of ane?
Last night I dreamed a dreary dream,
And I ken the day's thy ain!

"My wound is deep; I fain would sleep!
Take thou the vanguard of the three,
And bury me by the bracken bush,
That grows on yonder lily lea.

"O bury me by the bracken bush,
Beneath the blumin' brier;
Let never living mortal ken
That a kindly Scot lies here!"

He lifted up that noble lord,
With the saut tear in his e'e;
And he hid him by the bracken bush,
That his merry men might not see.

The moon was clear, the day drew near,
The spears in flinders flew;
And many a gallant Englishman
Ere day the Scots'men slew.

The Gordons gay, in English blude
They wat their hose and shoon;
The Lindsays flew like fire about,
Till a' the fray was dune.

The Percy and Montgomery met,
That either of other was fain;
They swakkit swords, and sair they swat,
And the blude ran doun between.

"Now yield thee, yield thee, Percy!" he said,
"Or else I will lay thee low!"
"To whom maun I yield," Earl Percy said,
"Since I see that it maun be so?"

"Thou shalt not yield to lord or loun,
Nor yet shalt thou yield to me;
But yield thee to the bracken bush
That grows on yonder lily lea!"

This deed was done at the Otterburn
About the breaking of the day;
Earl Douglas was buried at the bracken bush,
And Percy led captive away.

EDOM O' GORDON.

THIS ballad was first printed at Glasgow, by Robert and Andrew Foulis, in 1775, and was afterwards inserted, with some additions, in "Percy's Reliques." Mr Finlay has given a version of it, which differs in some respects from the following, especially towards the close; but I regard it as inferior in merit.

The ballad has an historical basis. "Edom o' Gordon" was Adam Gordon of Auchindown, who, as deputy for his brother, the Marquis of Huntly, acted a conspicuous part in the civil wars which followed the dethronement of Queen Mary. In 1571 he was engaged in several encounters with the clan Forbes, in one of which Arthur Forbes, commonly called Black Arthur, brother of the chief of the family, was slain. Gordon then, according to Crawford, who narrates the story in his Memoirs, "sent one Captain Ker, with a party of foot, to summon the castle of Towie in the Queen's name. The owner, Alexander Gordon, was not then at home, and his lady, confiding too much in her sex, not only refused to surrender, but gave Ker very injurious language; upon which, unreasonably transported with fury, he ordered his men to fire the castle, and barbarously burnt the unfortunate gentlewoman with her whole family, amounting to thirty-seven persons. Nor was he even so much as cashiered for this inhuman action, which made Gordon share both in the scandal and the guilt."

This extract explains the fact mentioned in Percy's intro-

ductory notice to the ballad, that a fragment in his possession was entitled "Captain Adam Carre." Had it been necessary to make the ballad strictly consonant with history, I should unhesitatingly have adopted Mr Pinkerton's emendation, and substituted "Towie House" for the "House o' the Rodes." The latter is the name of an old ruin near the village of Gordon in Berwickshire; and the south-country reciters, knowing nothing of the real story, have named it as the site of the tragedy. I observe that Mr Robert Bell, who has included "Edom o' Gordon" in his "Early Ballads," has been misled by this misnomer, so far as to call this a Border ballad, and to transfer the scene of Auchindown's depredations (including the house of Towie, in Aberdeenshire, which he calls Tavoy) to Berwickshire. Many such instances of change of names, effected during the course of recitation, occur in the Scottish ballads; and they deserve note, as they indicate the district in which the poems were taken down, though they afford no evidence as to the part of the country in which they originated.

IT fell about the Martinmas,
When the wind blew shrill and cauld,
Said Edom o' Gordon to his men,
"We maun draw to a hauld.

"And whatna hauld sall we draw to,
My merrie-men and me?
We will gae to the house o' the Rodes,
To see that fair ladie."

The ladie stude on her castle wa',
Beheld baith dale and down,
There she was ware of a host of men
Were riding towards the town.

"O see ye not, my merry men a',
O see ye not what I see?
Methinks I see a host of men—
I marvel what they be."

She ween'd it had been her ain dear lord,
As he came riding hame;
It was the traitor, Edom o' Gordon,
Wha recked nor sin nor shame.

She had nae suner buskit hersell,
Nor putten on her goun,
Till Edom o' Gordon and his men
Were round about the toun.

They had nae suner supper set,
Nor suner said the grace,
Till Edom o' Gordon and his men
Were light about the place.

The ladie ran to her tower head,
As fast as she could dri'e,
To see if, by her fair speeches,
She could with him agree.

"Come doun to me, ye ladye gay,
Come doun, come doun to me;
This nicht shall ye lie within my arms,
The morn my bride shall be."

"I winna come doun, ye fause Gordon
I winna come doun to thee;
I winna forsake my ain dear lord,
That is sae far frae me."

"Gie owre your house, ye ladie fair,
Gie owre your house to me;
Or I shall burn yoursell therein,
But and your babies three."

"I winna gie owre, ye false Gordon,
To nae sic traitor as thee;
And if ye burn my ain dear babes,
My lord shall mak' ye dree!

"But reach my pistol, Glaud, my man,
And charge ye weel my gun;
For, but if I pierce that bludy butcher,
We a' shall be undone."

She stude upon the castle wa',
And let twa bullets flee;
She miss'd that bludy butcher's heart,
And only razed his knee.

"Set fire to the house!" quo' the false Gordon,
All wude wi' dule and ire;
"False ladie! ye shall rue that shot,
As ye burn in the fire."

"Wae worth, wae worth ye, Jock, my man!
I paid ye weel your fee;
Why pu' ye out the grund-wa-stane,
Lets in the reek to me?

"And e'en wae worth ye, Jock, my man!
I paid ye weel your hire;
Why pu' ye out my grund-wa-stane,
To me lets in the fire?"

"Ye paid me weel my hire, lady,
Ye paid me weel my fee;
But now I'm Edom o' Gordon's man,
Maun either do or die."

O then bespake her youngest son,
Sat on the nourice' knee;
Says, "Mother dear, gie owre this house,
For the reek it smothers me."

"I wad gie a' my gowd, my bairn,
Sae wad I a' my fee,
For ae blast o' the westlin' wind,
To blaw the reek frae thee!"

O then bespake her daughter dear—
She was baith jimp and sma'—
"O row me in a pair o' sheets,
And tow me owre the wa'."

They row'd her in a pair o' sheets,
And tow'd her owre the wa';
But on the point o' Gordon's spear
She gat a deadly fa'.

O bonnie, bonnie was her mouth,
And cherry were her cheeks;
And clear, clear was her yellow hair,
Whereon the red blude dreeps.

Then wi' his spear he turned her owre,
O gin her face was wan!
He said, "You are the first that e'er
I wish'd alive again."

He turned her owre and owre again,
O gin her skin was white!
"I might hae spared that bonnie face,
To hae been some man's delight.

"Busk and boun, my merrie-men a',
For ill dooms I do guess;
I canna look on that bonnie face,
As it lies on the grass!"

"Wha looks to freits, my master deir,
It's freits will follow them;
Let it ne'er be said that Edom o' Gordon
Was dauntit by a dame."

But when the lady saw the fire
Come flaming owre her head,
She wept, and kiss'd her children twain,
Says, "Bairns, we been but dead."

The Gordon then his bugle blew,
And said, "Awa', awa';
The house o' the Rodes is a' in a flame,
I hold it time to ga'."

O then bespied her ain dear lord,
As he came owre the lee;
He saw his castle all in a lowe,
Sae far as he could see.

"Put on, put on, my wichty men,
As fast as ye can dri'e;
For he that is hindmost of the thrang,
Shall ne'er get gude o' me!"

Then some they rade, and some they ran,
Fu' fast out-owre the bent;
But ere the foremost could win up,
Baith lady and babes were brent.

He wrang his hands, he rent his hair,
And wept in teenfu' mood;
"Ah, traitors! for this cruel deed,
Ye shall weep tears of blude."

And after the Gordon he has gane,
Sae fast as he might drie,
And soon i' the Gordon's foul heart's blude,
He's wroken his fair ladie.

THOMAS OF ERCILDOUNE.

It would be a departure from the plan of this collection were I to enter into an elaborate dissertation upon the personal history of the famous Thomas Learmont of Ercildoune, better known as Thomas the Rhymer, or upon the prophecies current under his name. I shall merely remark that he was a real personage, born during the reign of Alexander III., and living in the days of Wallace. His adventures with the Queen of Elfland, and his journey to her enchanted realm, formed the introduction to those prophecies, and were preserved traditionally in Scotland in the shape of a ballad, of which the best version was given by Sir Walter Scott in his "Minstrelsy," and is here inserted under the title of "True Thomas." That version, which agrees in essentials with another recovered by Mr Jamieson at the same time, might have been adopted without any farther prefatory; but I cannot help thinking that the lovers of ancient ballad poetry will be gratified by the perusal of another composition, which I have called "Thomas of Ercildoune," and which probably never was intrusted to the reciters. It is part of a romance containing a portion of the prophecies; and of this there are no fewer than three manuscript copies, or rather versions, preserved in different public libraries in England. Mr Jamieson has printed the Cambridge copy, and Mr David Laing the copy from the Cathedral Library of Lincoln, Sir Walter Scott having previously given an extract from a fragment in the British Museum. Of these,

the oldest is that of Lincoln, believed, from the character of the writing, to have been transcribed in the fourteenth century. From the exordium to this version we learn that the transcriber was an Englishman; but the poem itself is clearly Scottish; and if we are to regard it as the original of "True Thomas," a supposition which is warranted by the context, it is most interesting to mark the changes, both of language and rhythm, incidental to a long course of oral tradition.

The subjoined version is collated from the Lincoln and Cambridge copies, and is noway altered or modernised, except as regards the spelling. With the aid of a few foot-notes, explanatory of obsolete words and phrases, I believe this copy of "Thomas of Ercildoune" will be found quite intelligible. The other ballad, "True Thomas," is the popular current version, as taken down from recitation towards the close of the last or beginning of the present century.

AS I me went this Andyr's day,
Full fast in mind making my moan,
In a merry morning of May,
By Huntly banks myself alone,

I heard the jay, and the throstle-cock,
The mavis menyed * in her song,
The wodewale beryd † as a bell,
That all the wood about me rung.

Alone in longing thus as I lay,
Underneath a seemly tree,
Saw I where a ladye gay,
Came riding over a lonely lea.

* Lamented. † Made a noise.

If I should sit to Domesday,
All with my tongue to know and see,
Certainly all her array
It never shall be scryed * for me.

Her palfrey was a dapple grey;
Such one I saw ne never none;
As does the sun on summer's day,
That fair ladye herself she shone.

Her selle it was of royal bone,†
Full seemely was that sight to see!
Stiffly set with precious stone,
And compass'd all with cramoisie.

Stones of orience, great plentie;
Her hair about her head it hung;
She rode over that lonely lea,
And whiles she blew, and whiles she sung.

Her girths of noble silk they were,
The buckles were of beryl stone;
Her stirrups were of crystal clear,
And all with pearl o'er begone.

Her paytrel was of irale fine,
Her crupper was of orfarie;
And as clear gold her bridle shone;
On either side hung belles three.

She led seven greyhounds in a leash,
Seven raches ‡ by her foot they ran;

* Described. † Her saddle was of pure ivory.
‡ Dogs that hunt by scent.

She bare a horn about her halse,*
And under her girdle many a flane.†

Thomas lay, and saw that sight,
Underneath a seemly tree;
He said, "Yon is Mary most of might,
That bare the child that died for me.

"But I speak with yon ladye bright,
I trow my heart will burst in three;
But I shall go with all my might,
Her for to meet at the Eildon tree!"

Thomas rathely up he raise,
And he ran over that mountain hye,
And soothly, as the story says,
He her met at the Eildon tree.

He kneeled down upon his knee,
Underneath the greenwood spray;
And said, "Lovely ladye, reive on me,‡
Queen of heaven, as thou well may!"

Then said that ladye, mild of thought:—
"Thomas, let such wordés be,
Queen of heaven am I not,
For I took never so high degree.

"But I am of another countrie,
If I be parell'd most of price;
I ride after the wildé fee,§
My raches run at my device."

* Neck. † Arrow. ‡ Have pity. § Deer.

"If thou be parell'd most of price,
And here rid'st thus in thy follie,
Lovely ladye, as thou art wise,
Do give me leave to lie thee by."

She said, "Do way! that were follie!
I pray thee, Thomas, thou let me be,
For I say thee full sekerly *
That sin will fordo all my beautie."

"Now, lovely ladye, reive on me,
And I will evermore with thee dwell;
Here my troth I plight to thee,
Whether thou wonne in heaven or hell!"

* * * * *

Thomas stood up in that stead,
And he beheld that ladye gay;
The hair that hung upon her head,
The half was black, the half was gray.

And all the rich clothing was away,
That he before saw in that stead;
Her eyes seemed out, that were so gray,
And all her body like the lead.

Then said Thomas, "Alace, Alace!
In faith this is a doleful sight;
How art thou faded thus in the face,
And shone before as the sun so bright!"

She said, "Take thy leave of sun and moon,
And also of leaf that grows on tree;

* Certainly.

This twelvemonth shalt thou with me gone,
And middle earth thou shalt not see."

He kneeled down upon his knee,
To Mary mild he made his moan:
"Ladye, but that thou reive on me,
All my games from me are gone!

"Alas!" he said, "and woe is me!
I trow my deeds will work my woe:
Jesu! my soul beteche* I thee,
Wheresoever my bones shall go!"

She led him in at Eildon hill,
Underneath a derne† lee,
Where it was dark as midnight mirk,
And ever water to the knee.

The maintainence of dayés three,
He heard but soughing of the flood;
At the last he said, "Full woe is me;
Almost I die, for fault of food!"

She led him in to a fair herbere,
Where fruit was growing in great plentie;
Pears and apples both ripe they were,
The date, and also the damasee.

The fig, and also the wine-berry,
The nightingales lying in their nest;
The papinjays fast about 'gan fly,
And throstles sung, would have no rest.

* Recommend to. † Secret, subterranean.

He press'd to pull the fruit with his hand,
As man for food that was near faint;
She said, "Thomas, thou let them stand,
Or else the fiend will thee attaint.

"If thou it pluck, soothly to say,
Thy soul goes to the fire of hell;
It never comes out or Domesday,
But there in pain aye for to dwell.

"Thomas, soothly I thee hight;
Come lay thy head down on my knee,
And thou shalt see the fairest sight,
That ever saw man of thy countrie!"

He did in haste as she him bad,
His head upon her knee he laid;
For her to please he was right glad,
And then that ladye to him she said—

"Seest thou yonder that fair way,
That lies over yonder high mountayne?
Yon is the way to heaven for aye,
When sinful souls have dree'd their pain.

"Seest thou now, Thomas, yonder way,
That lies so low beneath yon rise?
Yon is the way, the sooth to say,
Unto the joy of Paradise.

"Seest thou yet yonder third way,
That lies over yon green plain?
That is the way, the sooth to say,
That sinful souls shall pass to pain.

"But seest thou yonder fourthé way,
That lies over yon deep dell?
Yon is the way, so well-a-way,
Unto the burning fire of hell!

"Seest thou now yonder fair castell,
That standés upon yon high hill?
Of town and tower it bears the bell,
The like is none on earth it till.

"In sooth, Thomas, yon is mine own,
Also the king's of this countrie;
But me were lever hanged and drawn,
Or that he wist thou lay by me!

"When thou comest to yon castell gay,
I pray thee courteous man to be;
And what so any man to thee say,
Look that thou answer none but me.

"My Lord is served at every mess,
With thirty knightés fair and free;
And I shall say, sitting at the dais,
I took thy speech beyond the sea."

Thomas still as stone he stood,
And he beheld that ladye gay;
She came again, as fair and good,
And also rode on her palfrey.

Her greyhounds filled with deer's blood,
Her raches coupled, by my fay;
She blew her horn with main and mood,
And to the castle took her way.

Into the hall soothly she went,
Thomas followed at her hand;
Then ladies came both fair and gent,
Full courteously to her kneeland.*

Harp and fiddle both they fand,
Ghittern, and also the sautry,
Lute and rebeck, both gangand,
And all manner of minstrelsy.

Knights were dancing, by three and three;
There was revel, game, and play;
Lovely ladies, fair and free,
Dancing with them in rich array.

Thomas dwelt in that soláce,
More than I you say, pardie;
Till on a day, so have I grace,
That lovely ladye said to me—

"Go, busk thee, Thomas, busk thee again,
For thou may'st here no longer be;
Hie thee fast, with might and main,
I shall thee bring to the Eildon tree."

Thomas answered with heavy cheer,
"Lovely ladye, now let me be,
For certainly I have been here
But for the space of dayés three!"

"For sooth, Thomas, I thee tell,
Thou hast been here three year and more;

* Kneeling.

But longer here thou may'st not dwell,
The skill I will thee tell wherefore.

"To-morrow of hell the foulé fiend,
Among these folk shall choose his fee;
Thou art a fair man and a hende,
I trow full well he would choose thee!

"For all the gold that ever may be,
From heaven unto the worldés end,
Thou beest never betray'd for me;
Therefore with me I rede thee wende."

She brought him again to the Eildon tree,
Underneath the greenwood spray;
In Huntly banks 'tis merry to be,
Where birdés sing both night and day!

"Farewell, Thomas; I wende my way;
I may no longer stand with thee."
"Give me some token, ladye gay,
That I may say I spoke with thee."

"To harp and carp, wheresoever ye gone,
Thomas, take thee these with thee."
"Harping," said he, "ken I none,
For tongue is the chief of minstrelsie!"

"If thou wilt spell, or talés tell,
Thomas, thou never shall make lie:
Wheresoever thou go, to frith or fell,
I pray thee, speak never no ill of me."

TRUE THOMAS.

THE Queen of Elphin, or Elfland, as she appears in the records of Scottish Demonology, bears no resemblance to the gentle Titania, queen of the fairy chivalry, with whom Shakespeare has peopled the flowery woods of Attica. She was, as the ballads indicate, a kind of feudatory sovereign under the Satanic power, to whom she was obliged to pay "kane" or tithes in kind; and, as her own natural subjects strongly objected to that transference of their allegiance, the quota was usually made up of children, who had been stolen away before they received the rite of baptism. This belief was at one time universal throughout Scotland; and charms were commonly used to defend houses against the inroads of the fairies before the arrival of the priest. Baptism, however, did not always act as a sufficient preventative. It is difficult to understand what limits were assigned to the power of the Queen of Elphin; for, besides Thomas the Rhymer, she was supposed to have carried away no less a personage than James IV. from the field of Flodden, and to have detained him in her enchanted country.

There was also a King of Elphin; but, from all accounts volunteered by, or extorted from, the witches, (of which many are preserved in the Justiciary and Presbytery records) he appears to have been a placable, luxurious, and indolent sort of personage; a complete *Roi Fainéant*, who intrusted the whole business of his realm, including the recruiting department, to the charge of his spouse. That she abused that trust most shamefully, will be gathered from the context of the

foregoing ballad. We have a slight glimpse of both their Majesties in the Confession of Isobel Gowdie, in Aulderne, a parish in the shire of Nairn, who was indicted for witchcraft in 1662. She said:—"I was in the Downie-hills, and got meat there from the Queen of Faerie, more than I could eat. The Queen of Faerie is brawly clothed in white linens, and in white and brown clothes, &c.; and the King of Faerie is a braw man, weel-favoured, and broad-faced, &c. There was elf-bulls rowting and skoyling up and down there, and affrighted me." It is impossible not to echo the sentiment of Mr Pitcairn, who, in editing the report of Isabel Gowdie's confession, remarks—"It is a thousand pities that the learned Examinators have so piously declined indulging the world with the detailed description of these illustrious personages. Under the singularly descriptive powers of Isobel Gowdie, much might have been learned of Fairy-land and its mythology."

I ought to state that, according to the general tradition, True Thomas, on his return to the upper world, merely tarried long enough there to enunciate his prophecies; having fulfilled which duty, he returned to Elphin-land, where he yet remains, an honoured, and possibly an unsuspected guest.

TRUE Thomas lay on Huntley bank;
A ferlie* he spied with his e'e;
And there he saw a ladie bright,
Come riding down by the Eildon tree.

Her skirt was made o' the grass-green silk,
Her mantle o' the velvet fine,
At ilka tett of her horse's mane,
Hung fifty siller bells and nine.

* A wonder: something marvellous.

True Thomas he pu'd aff his cap,
And louted low down on his knee;
"All hail, thou mighty Queen of Heaven,
For thy peer on earth I never did see!"

"O no, O no, Thomas," she said,
"That name does not belong to me;
I'm but the Queen of fair Elfland,
That hither have come to visit thee!

"Harp and carp, Thomas," she said,
"Harp and carp, along with me;
And if ye daur to kiss my lips,
Sure of your body I shall be!"

"Betide me weal, betide me woe,
That weird shall never daunton me!"
Syne he has kissed her rosy lips,
All underneath the Eildon tree.

"Now ye maun go wi' me," she said,
"True Thomas, ye maun go wi' me;
And ye maun serve me seven years,
Through weal or woe as may chance to be."

She's mounted on her milk-white steed,
She's ta'en True Thomas up behind;
And aye, whene'er her bridle rang,
The steed gaed swifter than the wind.

O they rade on, and further on,
The steed gaed swifter than the wind
Until they reached a desert wide,
And living land was left behind.

"Light down, light down now, Thomas," she said,
"And lay your head upon my knee;
Light down, and rest a little space,
And I will show you ferlies three.

"O see ye na that braid braid road,
That stretches o'er the lily leven?
That is the path of wickedness,
Though some call it the road to heaven.

"And see ye na yon narrow road,
Sae thick beset wi' thorns and briers?
That is the path of righteousness,
Though after it but few inquires.

"And see ye na yon narrow road,
That winds about the ferny brae?
That is the way to fair Elfland,
Where you and I this night maun gae.

But, Thomas, ye maun hauld your tongue,
Whatever you may hear or see;
For if ye speak word in Elfin land,
Ye'll ne'er win back to your ain countrie!"

O they rade on, and further on,
And they waded through rivers abune the knee,
And they saw neither the sun nor the moon,
But they heard the roaring of a sea.

It was mirk mirk night, there was nae stern-light,
And they waded through red blude to the knee;
For a' the blude that's shed on the earth,
Rins through the springs o' that countrie.

Syne they came to a garden green,
And she pu'd an apple frae a tree—
"Take this for thy wages, True Thomas;
It will give thee the tongue that will never lie!"

"My tongue is my ain!" True Thomas, he said,
"A gudely gift ye wad gie to me!
I neither docht to buy nor sell,
At fair or tryste where I might be.

"I docht neither speak to prince nor peer,
Nor ask for grace from fair ladye!"
"Now hauld thy tongue, Thomas!" she said,
"For as I say, so must it be."

He has gotten a coat of the even cloth,
And a pair o' shoon of the velvet green;
And till seven years were come and gane,
True Thomas on earth was never seen.

HELEN OF KIRKCONNELL.

THIS beautiful ballad is founded on a traditionary event, the date of which, however, cannot be satisfactorily ascertained. The locality is in the parish of Kirkpatrick-Fleming, in Dumfriesshire, where the graves of Helen and her lover are still pointed out. The story is thus related by Sir Walter Scott:—

"A lady of the name of Helen Irving, or Bell (for this is disputed by the two clans), daughter of the laird of Kirkconnell, in Dumfriesshire, and celebrated for her beauty, was beloved by two gentlemen in the neighbourhood. The name of the favoured suitor was Adam Fleming of Kirkpatrick; that of the other has escaped tradition; although it has been alleged that he was a Bell of Blacket-house. The addresses of the latter were, however, favoured by the friends of the lady, and the lovers were therefore obliged to meet in secret, and by night, in the churchyard of Kirkconnell, a romantic spot, surrounded by the river Kirtle. During one of these private interviews, the jealous and despised lover suddenly appeared on the opposite bank of the stream, and levelled his carabine at the breast of his rival. Helen threw herself before her lover, received in her bosom the bullet, and died in his arms. A desperate and mortal combat ensued between Fleming and the murderer, in which the latter was cut to pieces."

The ballad has often been imitated: but even in the best of these imitations we miss the exquisite pathos of the original.

I WISH I were where Helen lies!
Night and day on me she cries;
O that I were where Helen lies,
On fair Kirkconnell lee!

Curst be the heart that thought the thought,
And curst the hand that fired the shot,
When in my arms burd Helen dropt,
And died to succour me!

O think ye na my heart was sair,
When my love dropt down and spake nae mair!
There did she swoon wi' meikle care,
On fair Kirkconnell lee.

As I went down the water side,
None but my foe to be my guide,
None but my foe to be my guide,
On fair Kirkconnell lee—

I lighted down, my sword did draw,
I hacked him in pieces sma',
I hacked him in pieces sma',
For her sake that died for me.

O Helen fair, beyond compare!
I'll weave a garland of thy hair
Shall bind my heart for evermair,
Until the day I dee!

O that I were where Helen lies!
Night and day on me she cries;
Out of my bed she bids me rise,
Says "Haste, and come to me!"

O Helen fair! O Helen chaste!
Were I with thee I would be blest,
Where thou lies low and takes thy rest,
On fair Kirkconnell lee.

I wish my grave were growing green;
A winding-sheet drawn o'er my e'en,
And I in Helen's arms lying
On fair Kirkconnell lee.

I wish I were where Helen lies!
Night and day on me she cries,
And I am weary of the skies,
For her sake that died for me!

JOHNIE OF BRAIDISLEE.

THERE is no traditionary account of the circumstances connected with this ballad, which would appear to belong to Dumfriesshire, the kirk of Durisdeer lying immediately below the romantic pass of Dalveen. In olden times this district was a celebrated deer-forest, as is shown by the names of places, such as Deer-hass, Deer-edge, &c.; but the stag and hind have long since disappeared from the low countries.

The ballad is very ancient, and of great popularity, and various versions of it are extant. One of considerable merit, entitled "Johnie of Cocklesmuir," is to be found in Mr Kinloch's collection; another, called "Johnie of Braidisbank," was given by Mr Motherwell. The following version has been framed by collating the copy in "The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border" with various others.

JOHNIE rose up in a May morning,
Called for water to wash his hands:
"Gar loose to me the gude grey dogs,
That are bound wi' iron bands."

When Johnie's mother gat word o' that,
Her hands for dule she wrang:
"O Johnie, for my benison,
To the greenwood dinna gang!

"Eneugh ye hae o' the gude wheat breid,
And eneugh o' the blude-red wine;
And ye'll win your mother's benison,
Gin ye wad stay at hame."

But Johnie busk'd up his gude bend bow,
His arrows ane by ane;
And he has gane to Durisdeer,
To hunt the dun deer down.

Johnie lookit east, and Johnie lookit west,
And a little below the sun;
And there he espied the dun deer sleeping,
Aneath a bush o' broom.

Johnie he shot, and the dun deer lap,
And he's wounded her on the side;
And atween the water and the wood,
He laid the dun deer's pride.

They eat sae meikle o' the venison,
And drank sae meikle o' the blude,
That Johnie and his twa greyhounds
Fell asleep in yonder wood.

And by there cam a silly auld man,
And a silly auld man was he;
And he's away to the proud foresters,
To tell what he did see.

"What news, what news, ye silly auld man?
What news hae ye to me?"
"Nae news, nae news," quo' the silly auld man;
"But what my e'en did see.

"As I cam in by yon greenwood,
And doun amang the scroggs,
The bonniest youth that e'er I saw,
Lay sleeping atween twa dogs.

" The shirt that was upon his back
Was o' the Holland sma';
And the coat that he had on his back
Was laid wi' gowd fu' braw."

Then up spak the first forester,
The head man owre them a':
" If this be Johnie o' Braidislee,
To him we winna draw."

But up and spak the neist forester
(His sister's son was he):
" If this be Johnie o' Braidislee,
We soon shall gar him die!"

Out then shot one, out then shot twa,
Out then shot twa or three;
Out shot the Master Forester,
And wounded him in the thie.

Johnie set his back unto an aik,
His foot against a stane;
And he has slain the seven foresters,
He has slain them a' but ane.

He has broke three ribs in that ane's side,
But and his collar-bane,
He's laid him twa-fold owre his steed,
Bade him carry the tidings hame.

" O is there na a bonnie bird
Can sing as I can say,
Can flee away to my mother's bower,
And tell to fetch Johnie away?

" Is there na a bird in a' this forest
Will do as meikle for me,
As dip its wing in the wan water,
And straik it on my e'e-bree ?"

The starling flew to his mother's window-stane ;
It whistled and it sang ;
And aye the owerword o' its tune
Was, " Johnie tarries lang !"

They made a rod o' the hazel bush,
Another o' the slae-thorn tree ;
And mony, mony were the men
At fetching our Johnie.

Then out and spak his auld mither,
And fast her tears did fa' :
" Ye wadna be warned, my son Johnie,
Frae the hunting to bide awa.

" Aft hae I brought to Braidislee
The less gear and the mair ;
But I ne'er brought to Braidislee
What grieved my heart sae sair."

Now Johnie's gude bend bow is broke,
And his grey dogs are slain ;
And his body lies in Durisdeer,
And his hunting it is done.

CLERK SAUNDERS.

THIS ballad, during the process of tradition, has undergone many alterations; and has been so mixed up with another, that their reconstruction as separate poems is a work of extreme difficulty. A very fine version has been given in the "Border Minstrelsy," but those of Messrs Kinloch and Buchan supply material for making the story more coherent. I have therefore, besides minor changes, inserted eleven stanzas which do not appear in Sir Walter Scott's version, and have deleted eight. I have, moreover, followed the old method of the reciters, by dividing the ballad into two parts.

PART I.

CLERK SAUNDERS was an Earlie's son,
Weel learned at the schule;
May Margaret was a King's daughter,
Baith lo'ed the ither weel.

Clerk Saunders and May Margaret,
Walked ower yon garden green;
And sad and heavy was the love
That fell them twa between.

"A bed, a bed," Clerk Saunders said,
"A bed for you and me!"
"Fye na, fye na," said May Margaret,
"Till anes we married be.

" For in may come my seven bauld brothers,
Wi' torches burning bright;
They'll say—' We hae but ae sister,
And behold she's wi' a knight!'"

" Then take the sword frae my scabbard,
And slowly lift the pin;
And you may swear, and save your aith,
Ye never let me in.

" And take a napkin in your hand,
And tie up baith your e'en;
And you may swear, and save your aith,
Ye saw me na since yestreen."

It was about the midnight hour,
And they were fa'en asleep,
When in and came her seven brothers,
And stood at her bed feet.

Then out and spake the first o' them,
" We'll awa, and let them be."
And out and spake the second o' them,
" His father has nae mair than he!"

And out and spake the third o' them,
" I wot they are lovers dear!"
And out and spake the fourth o' them,
" They hae lo'ed for mony a year!"

Then out and spake the fifth o' them,
" It were sin true love to twain!"
" 'Twere shame," out spake the sixth o' them,
" To slay a sleeping man!"

Then up and gat the seventh o' them,
And never a word spake he;
But he has striped* his bright brown brand
Through Saunders' fair bodie.

Clerk Saunders he started, and Margaret she turned,
Into his arms as asleep she lay;
And sad and silent was the night,
That was atween thir twae.

And they lay still and sleeped sound,
Till the day began to daw;
And kindly to him she did say,
"It is time, love, you were awa'."

But he lay still, and sleeped sound,
Till the sun began to shine;
She looked atween her and the wa',
And dull, dull were his e'en.

She turned the blankets to the foot,
The sheets unto the wa',
And there, anent his bonny heart,
The bluidy wound she saw.

"O wae be to ye, my fause brothers,
An ill death may ye dee,
For ye have slain my ain true love,
That would hae married me!"

Then in and came her father dear.
Was belted wi' a brand;

* Thrust.

Sae saftly as he trod the floor,
And in her bower did stand.

Says—"Hold your tongue, my daughter dear,
And let your mourning be;
I'll wed you to a higher match
Than his father's son could be."

"Gae wed, gae wed your seven sons,
Ill wedded may they be!
Sin' they hae killed my ain true love,
For wedded I ne'er shall be!"

PART II.

When she had sitten intill her bower
A twelvemonth and a day,
Even below her bower window,
She heard a knock and cry.

"O are ye a thief or robber," she says,
That comes to burn or break?
Or are ye ony masterfu' man,
Is seeking of a maik?"

"I am na ony thief," he says,
"Nor do I seek a maik;
But I'm Clerk Saunders, thy ain love,
Come here with thee to speak.

"I canna rest, Margaret," he says,
"Down in the grave where I must be,
Till ye give me my faith and troth again,
I wot, true love, I gied to thee."

"Your faith and troth ye sall never get,
Nor our true love sall never twin,
Until ye come within my bower,
And kiss me cheek and chin."

"My mouth it is full cold, Margaret,
It has the smell, now, of the ground;
And if I kiss thy comely mouth,
Thy days of life will not be lang.

"O, cocks are crowing a merry midnight,
I wot the wild-fowls are boding day;
Give me my faith and troth again,
And let me fare me on my way."

"Thy faith and troth thou sall na get,
And our true love shall never twin,
Until ye tell what comes of women,
I wot, who die in strong travailing?"

"Their beds are made in the heavens high,
Down at the foot of our good Lord's knee,
Weel set about wi' gillyflowers;
I wot sweet company for to see.

"O cocks are crowing a merry midnight,
I wot the wild-fowl are boding day;
The psalms of heaven will soon be sung,
And I, ere now, will be missed away."

Then she has ta'en a crystal wand,
And she has stroken her troth thereon,
She has given it him out at the shot-window,
Wi' mony a sigh, and heavy groan.

"I thank ye, Margaret; I thank ye, Margaret;
And aye I thank ye heartilie;
Gin ever the dead come for the quick,
Be sure, Margaret, I'll come for thee."

Sae painfully she clam the wa',
She clam the wa' up after him;
Hosen nor shoon upon her feet,
She had na time to put them on.

"Is there ony room at your head, Saunders?
Is there ony room at your feet?
Or ony room at your side, Saunders,
Where fain, fain, I wad sleep?"

"There's nae room at my head, Margaret,
There's nae room at my feet;
My bed it is full lowly now:
Amang the hungry worms I sleep.

"Cauld mould is my covering now,
But and my winding-sheet;
The dew it falls nae sooner down,
Then my resting-place is weet.

"But plait a wand o' the bonnie birk,
And lay it on my breast;
And gae ye hame, May Margaret,
And wish my saul gude rest."

GUDE WALLACE.

THIS ballad of the people, referring to one of the achievements of Sir William Wallace as more particularly set forth by Blind Harry, is still in high favour in the north, and the stall copies supply different versions. I have looked over some half-dozen of these; but the version to which I give the decided preference is that printed by Mr Motherwell from the collection published at Peterhead. The south country reciters adhere to the narrative of Blind Harry, by laying the scene of action at Lochmaben in Dumfriesshire. Their north country brethren have changed it to Perth, or St Johnstoun's as the Fair City was anciently called.

WALLACE in the hie Highlands,
Neither meat nor drink gat he;
Said, "Fa' me life, or fa' me death,
Now to some town maun I be."

He's put on his short cleiding,
And on his short cleiding put he;
Says, "Fa' me life, or fa' me death,
To Saint Johnstoun's I maun be."

He stepped o'er the river Tay,
I wot he stepped on dry land;
And he was aware of a weelfaur'd maid
Was washing there her lilie hands.

"What news, what news, ye weel-faur'd maid,
What news hae ye this day to me?"
"Nae news, nae news, ye gentle knight,
Nae news hae I this day to thee;
But fifteen lords in the hostel-house
Are waiting Wallace for to see."

"If I had but in my pocket,
The worth of one single pennie,
I would go to the hostel-house,
And there the Englishmen wad see."

She put her hand in her pocket,
And she has pulled out half-a-crown;
Says, "Take ye that, ye belted knight,
'Twill pay your way till ye come down."

As he went from the weel-faur'd maid,
A beggar bold I wat met he,
Was cover'd wi' a clouted cloak,
And in his hand a trusty tree.

"What news, what news, ye silly auld man,
What news hae ye this day to gie?"
"Nae news, nae news, ye belted knight,
Nae news hae I this day to thee;
But there's fifteen lords in the hostel-house
Waiting Wallace for to see."

"Ye'll lend to me your clouted cloak,
That covers you frae head to thie,
And I'll gang to the hostel-house,
Asking there for some supplie.

Now he's gane to the West-muir wood,
And there he pull'd a trusty tree,
And then he's on to the hostel-house,
Asking there for charitie.

Down the stair the captain comes,
Aye the puir man for to see;
"If ye be a captain as gude as ye look,
Ye'll give a puir man some supplie."

"Whaur were ye born, ye crooked carle?
Whaur were ye born, in what countrie?"
"In fair Scotland was I born,
Crooked carle that I be."

"I wad gie you fifty pounds,
Of gold and of the white monie,
I wad gie you fifty pounds,
If the traitor Wallace ye'd let me see."

"Tell down your monie," said Willie Wallace,
"Tell down your monie, if it be gude;
For I'm sure I hae it in my power,
And I never had a better bode.

"Tell down your monie, if it be gude,
And let me see if it be fine;
For I'm sure I hae it in my power
To bring the traitor Wallace in."

The monie was told down on the table,
Silver bright of pounds fiftie;
"Now here I stand," said Willie Wallace,
"And what hae ye to say to me?"

He fell'd the captain where he stood,
Wi' a downright straik upon the floor,
He slew the rest around the room,
And speer'd gin there were ony more.

"Come, cover the table," quo' Willie Wallace,
"Come, cover the table now and wi' haste,
For it will sune be three lang days,
Sin' I a bit o' meat did taste."

The table was not well covered,
Nor yet had he sat down to dine,
Till fifteen mair of the English lords
Cam' round the house where he was in.

The gudewife she ran butt the floor,
And aye the gudeman he ran ben;
From eight o'clock till four at noon,
Wallace has killed full thirty men.

He put his faes in sic a swither,
That five o' them he sticket dead;
Five o' them he drown'd in the river,
And five he hung in the West-muir wood.

Now he is on to the North-Inch gane,
Where the maid was washing tenderlie;
"Now, by my sooth," said Willie Wallace,
"It's been a sair day's wark to me!"

He's put his hand into his pocket,
And he has pu'd out twenty pun';
Says, "Take ye that, ye weel-faur'd maid,
For the gude luck o' your half-crown!"

ANNIE OF LOCHROYAN.

VERY few of the Scottish ballads are so beautiful or perfect as this, which I regard as the gem of Mr Jamieson's collection. The first version, printed in Herd's volumes, contains some evident interpolations—or rather transpositions—from a different ballad. This is evident towards the conclusion; for the catastrophe is represented as occurring on land, not on sea, which is entirely out of keeping with the previous part. In the version given by Sir Walter Scott, in the "Border Minstrelsy," there is a deal of extraneous and superfluous matter, which interferes with, and to a certain extent detracts from, the simplicity of the story. Sir Walter's edition was compiled from three manuscript copies and two recitations; and finding, in one or other of these, certain verses which, though episodical and unnecessary, were of considerable merit, and interesting both from historical allusion and reference to witchcraft, he adopted them. But the version of Mr Jamieson, which I have adhered to, with little more than verbal alterations of the slightest kind, seems to me by far the finest; and I am sure that it will be considered so by all the lovers of genuine ballad-poetry.

"O WHA will shoe my bonny feet?
Or wha will glove my hand?
Or wha will lace my middle jimp,
Wi' a new-made London band?

"And wha will kame my yellow hair,
Wi' a new-made siller kame?
And wha will be my bairn's father,
Till love Gregory come hame?"

"Your father 'll shoe your bonny feet,
Your mother glove your hand;
Your sister lace your middle jimp,
Wi' a new-made London band;

"Mysel' will kame your yellow hair
Wi' a new-made siller kame;
And the Lord will be the bairn's father
Till Gregory come hame."

"O gin I had a bonny ship,
And men to sail wi' me,
It's I wad gang to my true love,
Sin' he winna come to me!"

Her father's gi'en her a bonny ship,
And sent her to the strand;
She's ta'en her young son in her arms,
And turn'd her back to land.

She hadna been on the sea sailing,
About a month or more,
Till landed has she her bonny ship,
Near to her true love's door.

The night was dark, an' the wind was cauld
And her love was fast asleep,
And the bairn that was in her twa arms,
Fu' sair began to greet.

Lang stood she at her true love's door,
And lang tirl'd at the pin;
At length up gat his fause mother,
Says, "Wha's that wad be in?"

"O it is Annie of Lochroyan,
Your love, come o'er the sea,
But and your young son in her arms,
Sae open the door to me."

"Awa, awa, ye ill woman,
Ye're nae come here for gude;
Ye're but a witch, or a vile warlock,
Or mermaiden o' the flood!"

"I'm nae a witch, nor vile warlock,
Nor mermaiden," said she;
"But I am Annie of Lochroyan;
O open the door to me!"

"O gin ye be Annie of Lochroyan,
As I trow not you be,
Now tell me some o' the love-tokens
That pass'd 'tween thee and me."

"O dinna ye mind, love Gregory,
When we sate at the wine,
How we chang'd the napkins frae our necks,
It's no sae lang sinsyne?

"And yours was gude, and gude eneugh,
But nae sae gude as mine;
For yours was o' the cambrick clear,
But mine o' the silk sae fine.

"And dinna ye mind, love Gregory,
As we twa sate at dine,
How we chang'd the rings frae our fingers,
And I can show thee thine?

"And yours was gude, and gude eneugh,
Yet nae sae gude as mine;
For yours was o' the gude red gold,
But mine o' the diamonds fine.

"Sae open the door, love Gregory,
And open it wi' speed;
Or your young son, that is in my arms,
For cauld will soon be dead!"

"Awa, awa, ye ill woman,
Gae frae my door for shame;
For I hae gotten anither fair love,
Sae ye may hie ye hame!"

"O hae ye gotten anither fair love,
For a' the oaths ye sware?
Then fare ye weel, fause Gregory,
For me ye'se never see mair!"

O hooly, hooly gaed she back,
As the day began to peep;
She set her foot on gude ship board,
And sair, sair did she weep.

"Tak down, tak down that mast o' gowd,
Set up the mast o' tree;
Ill sets it a forsaken lady
To sail sae gallantlie!"

Love Gregory started frae his sleep,
And to his mother did say;
"I dream'd a dream this night, mither,
That maks my heart right wae.

"I dream'd that Annie of Lochroyan,
The flower of a' her kin,
Was standing mournin' at my door,
But nane would let her in."

"Gin it be for Annie of Lochroyan,
That ye mak a' this din;
She stood a' last night at your door,
But I trow she wan na in!"

"O wae betide ye, ill woman!
An ill dead may ye die,
That wadna open the door to her,
Nor yet wad waken me!"

O quickly, quickly raise he up,
And fast ran to the strand;
And then he saw her, fair Annie,
Was sailing frae the land.

And it's "Hey Annie!" and "How Annie!
O Annie, winna ye bide?"
But aye the mair that he cried "Annie!"
The faster ran the tide.

And it's "Hey Annie!" and "How Annie!
O Annie, speak to me!"
But aye the louder that he cried "Annie!"
The higher raise the sea.

The wind grew loud, and the sea grew rough,
And the ship was rent in twain;
And soon he saw her, fair Annie,
Come floating through the faem.

He saw his young son in her arms,
Baith toss'd abune the tide;
He wrang his hands, and fast he ran,
And plunged in the sea sae wide.

He catch'd her by the yellow hair,
And drew her to the strand;
But cauld and stiff was every limb,
Afore he reach'd the land.

O first he kiss'd her cherry cheek,
And syne he kiss'd her chin,
And sair he kiss'd her bonny lips,
But there was nae breath within.

And he has mourn'd o'er fair Annie,
Till the sun was ganging down,
Syne wi' a sigh his heart it brast,
And his soul to heaven has gone.

THE BATTLE OF HARLAW.

COMMON VERSION.

A BALLAD under this name is mentioned in the "Complaynt of Scotland" (1549); but it is very questionable whether the following effusion is even a version of the old one. It appeared for the first time in Allan Ramsay's "Evergreen," and has been regarded as doubtful by all subsequent collectors, though none have ventured to charge Ramsay with the authorship. Sibbald, in his "Chronicle of Scottish Poetry," thus expresses himself:—"Some difference of opinion prevails with respect to its antiquity. Mr Pinkerton thinks, from its manner, it might have been written soon after the event in 1411. Mr Ritson says, that it may, for anything that appears either in or out of it to the contrary, be as old as the fifteenth century. Without hesitation, however, I concur in opinion with Lord Hailes, who observes that it appears to have been at least retouched by a more modern hand: it does not speak in the language or in the versification of the fifteenth century, and will probably be found to be as recent as the days of Queen Mary or James the Sixth. It may be added that the 'slaughter' mentioned in the second stanza most probably alludes to some bloody engagement between the English and the Scots. If so, under what 'auld King Harry' did this happen? No battle answers such a description, excepting that of Flodden in 1513; and I venture to say that the author meant no other, notwithstanding the absurd anachronism with which he is chargeable."

I confess that I am very much of the same opinion; and moreover, I have a strong suspicion that we owe this ballad to the author of the "Raid of the Reidswire." On comparing the two, I find quite the same turn of expression, and rhythmical mechanism. The resemblance indeed is so close that I almost wonder how it has escaped the notice of previous commentators of the ballads. Supposing my conjecture to be well-founded, this ballad would still have a respectable rank in point of antiquity, as that of "Reidswire" is contained in the Bannatyne MS., giving an authorship not more modern than the early part of the reign of James VI.

Be that as it may, the ballad deserves preservation. It is at least faithful in detail; for it recounts with minuteness the origin and incidents of the battle, which was fought at the Harlaw, about ten miles north-west of Aberdeen, between the Earl of Mar, nephew of the Regent Albany, and Donald of the Isles, on 24th July 1411.

FRAE Dunidier as I came through,
Down by the hill of Benachie,
Alangst the lands of Garioch,
Great pitie was to hear and see
The noise and dulesome harmonie,
(That ever that dulefu' day did daw!)
Crying the coronach on hie,
Alas, alas, for the Harlaw!

I marvelit what the matter meint;
All folks were in a fiery farrie:*
I wist na wha was fae or friend;
Yet quietly I did me carry.

* Confusion.

But sin' the days of auld King Harry,
Sic slaughter was not heard nor seen;
And there I had not time to tarry,
For business in Aberdeen.

Thus as I walkit on the way,
To Inverury as I went,
I met a man, and bade him stay,
Requesting him to mak' me 'quaint
Of the beginning and event,
That happened there at the Harlaw:
Then he entreated me tak' tent,*
And he the truth should to me shaw.

Great Donald of the Isles did claim
Unto the lands of Ross some right,
And to the Governor he came,
Them for to have, gif that he might;
Wha saw his interest was but slight,
And therefore answered wi' disdain.
He hasted home baith day and night,
And sent nae bodword† back again.

But Donald, right impatient
Of that answer Duke Robert gave,
He vowed to God omnipotent,
All the haill lands of Ross to have,
Or else be graithit in his grave.
He would not quit his right for nought,
Nor be abasit like a slave;
That bargain should be dearly bought.

* Notice. † Reply.

Then hastilie he did command,
That all his weir-men should convene ;
Ilk ane weel-harnessed frae hand,
To meet and hear what he did mean.
He waxed wrath, and vowed tein ;*
Swearing he wad surprise the North,
Subdue the brugh of Aberdeen,
Mearns, Angus, and all Fife, to Forth.

Thus with the weir-men of the Isles,
Who were aye at his bidding boun' ;
With mony mae, with force and wiles,
Right far and near, baith up and doun ;
Through mount and muir, frae toun to toun,
Alang the lands of Ross, he roars ;
And all obeyed at his bandoun,
Even frae the north to southern shores.

Then all the countrie-men did yield,
For nae resistance durst they mak',
Nor offer battle in the field,
By force of arms to bear him back.
But they resolved all, and spak',
That best it was for their behove,
They should him for their chieftain tak',
Believing well he did them love.

Then he a proclamation made,
All men to meet at Inverness ;
Through Murray-land to make a raid,
Frae Arthursyre into Speyness :

* Revenge.

And further-mair he sent express
To show his colours and ensenzie, *
To all and sundry, mair or less,
Throughout the bounds of Boyne and Enzie.

And then through fair Strathbogie land,
His purpose was for to pursue;
And whasoever durst gainstand,
That race they should full sairly rue;
Then he bade all his men be true,
And him defend by force and slight;
And promised them rewards enow,
And mak' them men of meikle might.

Without resistance, as he said,
Through all these parts he stoutly past,
Where some were wae, and some were glad,
But Garioch was all aghast.
Through all these fields he sped him fast,
For sic a sight was never seen,
And then, forsooth, he longed at last,
To see the brugh of Aberdeen.

To hinder this proud enterprise,
The stout and mighty Earl of Mar,
With all his men in arms did rise,
Even frae Curgarf to Craigievar;
And down the side of Don right far,
Angus and Mearns did all convene,
To fight, ere Donald came sae near
The royal brugh of Aberdeen.

* Ensigns.

And thus the martial Earl of Mar
March'd with his men in right array,
Before his enemy was aware,
His banner boldly did display;
For weel eneugh they kenn'd the way,
And all their semblance weel they saw;
Without all danger or delay,
Came hastilie to the Harlaw.

With him the brave Lord Ogilvy,
Of Angus sheriff principal;
The Constable of good Dundee,
The vanguard led before them all;
Suppose in number they were small,
They first right boldly did pursue,
And made their foes before them fall,
Wha then that race did sairly rue.

And then worthy Lord Saltoun,
The strong undoubted Laird of Drum,
The stalwart Laird of Lawriestoun,
With ilk their forces all and some;
Panmure, with all his men, did come;
The Provost of brave Aberdeen,
With trumpets and with tuck of drum,
Came shortly in their armour sheen.

These with the Earl of Mar came on,
In the rear-ward right orderly;
Their enemies to set upon
In awful manner, hardily;
Together vowed to live and die
Since they had marched mony miles,

For to suppress the tyranny
Of doubted Donald of the Isles.

But he, in number ten to ane,
Right subtilie alang did ride,
With Malcomtosh, and fell Maclean,
With all their power at their side;
Presuming on their strength and pride,
Without all fear or any awe,
Right boldly battle did abide,
Hard by the toun of fair Harlaw.

The armies met, the trumpet sounds,
The dandering drums aloud did tuik;
Baith armies biding on the bounds,
Till ane of them the field should bruik;
Nae help was therefore, nane wad jouk, *
Fierce was the fight on ilka side,
And on the ground lay many a bouk,†
Of them that there did battle bide.

With doubtsome victory they dealt;
The bludy battle lasted lang;
Ilk man his neighbour's force there felt,
The weakest oft-times gat the wrang;
There was nae mows ‡ there them amang,
Naething was heard but heavy knocks;
That Echo made a dulefu' sang
Thereto resounding frae the rocks.

* Stoop to avoid a blow. † Body.
‡ Jesting.

But Donald's men at last gave back,
For they were all out of array;
The Earl of Mar's men through them brak',
Pursuing sharply in their way,
Their enemies to take or slay,
By dint of force to gar them yield;
Wha were right blithe to win away,
And so far fear'dness tint the field.

Then Donald fled, and that full fast,
To mountains hie, for all his might;
For he and his were all aghast,
And ran till they were out of sight:
And so of Ross he lost his right,
Though mony men with him he brought;
Towards the Isles fled day and night,
And all he wan was dearly bought.

This is (quoth he) the right report
Of all that I did hear and knaw;
Though my discourse be something short,
Take this to be a right sooth saw.*
Contrarie God and the King's law,
There was spilled meikle Christian blude,
Into the battle of Harlaw;
This is the sum, sae I conclude.

But yet a bonnie while abide,
And I shall make thee clearly ken,
What slaughter was on ilka side,
Of Lawland and of Highland men,

* True narrative.

Who for their own have ever been:
These lazy loons might well be spared,
Chasit like deers into their dens,
And gat their wages for reward.

Malcomtosh, of the clan head-chief,
Maclean, with his great haughty head,
With all their succour and relief,
Were dulefully dung to the dead;
And now we are freed of their feid,*
And will not long to come again;
Thousands with them, without remeid,
On Donald's side, that day were slain.

And on the other side were lost,
Into the field that dismal day,
Chief men of worth (of meikle cost),
To be lamented sair for aye;
The Lord Saltoun of Rothiemay,
A man of might and meikle main,
Great dolour was for his decay,
That sae unhappilie was slain.

Of the best men among them was
The gracious gude Lord Ogilvy,
The sheriff-principal of Angus,
Renown'd for truth and equitie,
For faith and magnanimitie;
He had few fellows in the field,
Yet fell by fatal destinie,
For he naeways would grant to yield.

* Feud.

Sir James Scrymgeour of Dudhope, knight,
Great Constable of fair Dundee,
Unto the duleful death was dight;
The King's chief bannerman was he,
A valiant man of chivalrie,
Whose predecessors won that place
At Spey, with good King William free,
'Gainst Murray, and Macduncan's race.

Gude Sir Alexander Irvine,
The much renowned laird of Drum,
Nane in his days was better seen,
When they were 'sembled all and some;
To praise him we should not be dumb,
For valour, wit, and worthiness;
To end his days he there did come,
Whose ransom is remeediless.

And there the Knight of Lawriestoun
Was slain into his armour sheen;
And gude Sir Robert Davidson,
Who Provost was of Aberdeen;
The Knight of Panmure as was seen,
A mortal man in armour bright;
Sir Thomas Murray stout and keen,
Left to the world their last good night.

There was not sin' King Kenneth's days,
Sic strange intestine cruel strife
In Scotland seen, as ilk man says,
Where mony likelie lost their life;
Which made divorce 'tween man and wife,
And mony children fatherless,

Which in this realm has been full rife :
Lord ! help these lands, our wrongs redress !

In July, on Saint James his even,
That four-and-twenty dismal day,
Twelve hundred, ten score, and eleven,
Of years sin' Christ, the sooth to say ;
Men will remember as they may,
When thus the veritie they knaw ;
And mony a ane may mourn for aye,
The brim battil of the Harlaw.

THE BATTLE OF HARLAW.

TRADITIONARY VERSION.

NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.

I AM indebted to the kindness of Lady John Scott for the following extremely spirited ballad, which was taken down some years ago in Aberdeenshire, where it is still very popular. It is sung to a beautiful air, with the following refrain to each stanza :—

"Wi' a drie, drie, drededronilie, drie."

The ballad is evidently ancient, and is of a higher class than many of the north-country songs.

AS I cam in by Garioch land,
And doun by Netherha',
There was fifty thousand Hielandmen,
A' marching to Harlaw.

As I cam on, and further on,
And doun, and by Balquhaim,
O there I met Sir James the Ross,
Wi' him Sir John the Græme.

"O cam ye frae the Highlands, man?
O cam ye a' the way?
Saw ye MacDonnell and his men,
As they cam frae the Skye?"

"Yes, we cam frae the Highlands, man,
And we cam a' the way;
And we saw MacDonnell and his men,
As they cam in frae Skye."

"O was ye near MacDonnell's men?
Did ye their numbers see?
Come, tell to me, John Hielandman,
What might their numbers be?"

"Yes, we was near, and near eneugh,
And we their numbers saw;
There was fifty thousand Hielandmen,
A' marching to Harlaw."

"Gin that be true," said James the Ross,
"We'll no come meikle speed;
We'll cry upon our merry men,
And turn our horses' head."

"O na, O na!" says John the Græme,
"That thing maun never be;
The gallant Græmes were never beat,
We'll try what we can dee."

As I cam on, and further on,
And doun and by Harlaw;
They fell fu' close on ilka side,
Sic straiks ye never saw.

They fell fu' close on ilka side,
Sic straiks ye never saw;
For ilka sword gaed clash for clash,
At the battle o' Harlaw!

The Hielandmen wi' their lang swords,
They laid on us fu' sair;
And they drave back our merry men,
Three acres breadth and mair.

Brave Forbes to his brother did say,
"O brother, dinna ye see;
They beat us back on ilka side,
And we'll be forced to flee!"

"O na, O na! my brother dear,
O na, that maunna be!
You'll tak your gude sword in your hand,
And ye'll gang in wi' me."

Then back to back the brothers brave
Gaed in amang the thrang,
And they swept doun the Hielandmen,
Wi' swords baith sharp and lang.

The first ae straik that Forbes strack,
He gar'd MacDonnell reel;
And the neist ae straik that Forbes strack,
The brave MacDonnell fell.

And siccan a Pitlarichie,
I'm sure ye never saw;
As was amang the Hielandmen,
When they saw MacDonnell fa'.

And when they saw that he was dead,
They turn'd and ran awa';
And they buried him in Legate's Den,
A large mile frae Harlaw.

Some rade, some ran, and some did gang,
They were o' sma' record ;
But Forbes and his merry men,
They slew them a' the road.

On Mononday at morning,
The battle it began ;
On Saturday at gloamin',
Ye'd scarce ken'd wha had wan.

And sic a weary buryin',
I'm sure ye never saw,
As was the Sunday after that,
On the muirs aneath Harlaw.

Gin onybody speer at ye
For them we took awa',
Ye may tell them plain, and very plain,
They're sleeping at Harlaw !

JOHNIE ARMSTRANG.

JOHN ARMSTRONG of Gilnockie, the hero of this ballad, was a noted marauder who, in the days of James V., levied black-mail on the Borders, and pursued his depredations even as far as Newcastle. In the year 1528 King James—an active and energetic prince, who was styled by his subjects the "King of the Commons," and who took such pains to suppress and punish the habitual violators of the law, that it was said of him that he made "the rush-bush keep the cow"—made a flying visit to the Borders under the pretext of hunting, but in reality to execute justice upon delinquents. That delightful old historian, Lindesay of Pitscottie, thus relates his dealing with Armstrong:—

"After this hunting he hanged John Armstrong, Laird of Gilnockie, and his complices to the number of thirty-six persons. For the which many Scottishmen heavily lamented, for he was the most redoubted chieftain that had been, for a long time, on the Borders either of Scotland or England. He rode ever with twenty-four able gentlemen well horsed; yet he never molested any Scottishman. But it is said that, from the Borders to Newcastle, every man, of whatsomever estate, paid him tribute to be free of his trouble. He came before the King with his foresaid number richly apparelled, trusting that, in respect of the free offer of his person, he should obtain the King's favour. But the King, seeing him and his men so gorgeous in their apparel, with so many brave

men under a tyrant's commandment, frowardly turning him about, he bade take the tyrant out of his sight, saying, 'What wants that knave that a king should have?' But John Armstrong made great offers to the King. That he would sustain himself, with forty gentlemen, ever ready at his service, on their own cost, without wronging any Scottishman; secondly, that there was not a subject in England, duke, earl, or baron, but, within a certain day, he should bring him to his Majesty, either quick or dead. At length he, seeing no hope of favour, said, very proudly: 'It is folly to seek grace at a graceless face. But, had I known this, I should have lived on the Borders in despite of King Harry and you both; for I know that King Harry would downweigh my best horse with gold to know that I were condemned to die this day.'"

There are two versions of this well-known ballad, but the following is entitled to the preference.

SOME speaks of lords, some speaks of lairds,
And sic-like men of high degree,
But I shall sing of a gentleman,
Some time called laird of Gilnockie.

The King has written a loving letter,
With his ain hand sae tenderlie;
And he has sent it to Johnie Armstrang,
To come and speak with him speedilie.

The Elliots and Armstrangs did convene;
They were a gallant companie:
"We'll ride and meet our lawful King,
And bring him safe to Gilnockie."

" Make kinnen and capon ready then,
And venison in great plentie ;
We'll welcome hame our royal King,
I hope he'll dine at Gilnockie !"

They ran their horse on the Langholm howm,
And brak' their spears wi' muckle main ;
The ladies lookit frae their loft windows :
" God bring our men weel back again !"

When Johnie cam before the King,
Wi' a' his men sae brave to see ;
The King he moved his bonnet to him,
He ween'd he was a king as well as he.

" May I find grace, my sovereign liege,
Grace for my loyal men and me ?
For my name it is Johnie Armstrang,
And subject of yours, my liege," said he.

" Away, away, thou traitor strang !
Out of my sicht soon mayst thou be !
I granted never a traitor's life,
And now I'll not begin with thee !"

" Grant me my life, my liege, my King !
And a goodly gift I'll gie to thee ;
Full four-and-twenty milk-white steeds,
Were a' foaled in a year to me.

" I'll gie thee all these milk-white steeds,
That prance and nicher at a spear ;
With as meikle gude English gelt
As four o' their braid backs can bear."

"Away, away, thou traitor strang!
Out o' my sicht soon mayst thou be!
I granted never a traitor's life,
And now I'll not begin with thee!"

"Grant me my life, my liege, my King!
And a costly gift I'll gie to thee;
Gude four-and-twenty ganging mills,
That gang through a' the year to me.

"These four-and-twenty mills complete,
Shall gang for thee through a' the year;
And as meikle of gude red wheat
As a' their happers dow to bear."

"Away, away, thou traitor strang!
Out o' my sicht soon mayst thou be!
I granted never a traitor's life,
And now I'll not begin with thee!"

"Grant me my life, my liege, my King!
And a great gift I'll gie to thee;
Bauld four-and-twenty sisters' sons
Shall for thee fight, tho' a' should flee!"

"Away, away, thou traitor strang!
Out o' my sicht soon mayst thou be!
I granted never a traitor's life,
And now I'll not begin with thee!"

"Grant me my life, my liege, my King!
And a brave gift I'll gie to thee;
All between here and Newcastle town
Shall pay their yearly rent to thee."

"Away, away, thou traitor strang!
Out o' my sicht soon mayst thou be!
I granted never a traitor's life,
And now I'll not begin with thee!

"Ye lied, ye lied, now, King!" he says,
"Although a King and Prince ye be;
For I've lo'ed naething in a' my life,
I will daur say't, but honestie:—

"Save a fleet horse, and a fair woman,
Twa bonnie dogs to kill a deer;
But England should have found me meal and malt,
Gif I had lived this hundred year.

"She should have found me meal and malt,
And beef and mutton in all plentie;
But ne'er a Scots wife could have said
That e'er I skaith'd her a poor flee.

"To seek het water beneath cauld ice,
I trow it is a great follie;
I have asked grace at a graceless face,
But there is nane for my men and me.

"But had I kenn'd, or I cam frae hame,
How thou unkind wad'st been to me,
I would have kept the Border-side,
In spite of all thy peers and thee.

"Wist England's King that I was ta'en,
O gin a blythe man he wad be!
For ance I slew his sister's son,
And on his breast-bane brak a tree!"

Johnie wore a girdle about his middle,
Embroidered o'er wi' burning gold,
Bespangled with the same metal,
Maist beautiful was to behold.

There hung nine targats at Johnie's hat,
And ilk ane worth three hundred pund—
"What wants that knave a King should have,
But the sword of honour and the crown?

"O whair got ye these targats, Johnie,
That blink sae brawly abune thy bree?"
"I gat them in the field fighting,
Where, cruel King, thou durst not be!

"Had I my horse, and my harness good,
And riding as I wont to be,
It should have been tauld this hundred year,
The meeting of my King and me!

"God be with thee, Christy, my brother!
Lang live thou laird of Mangertoun!
Lang mayst thou live on the Border-side,
Ere thou see thy brother ride up and doun.

"And God be with thee, Christy, my son,
Where thou sits on thy nurse's knee!
But an' thou live this hundred year,
Thy father's better thou'lt never be.

"Fareweel, my bonnie Gilnock-ha',
Where on the Esk thou standest stout;
Gif I had lived but seven years mair,
I wad have gilt thee round about."

Johnie murdered was at Carlinrigg,
And all his gallant companie ;
But Scotland's heart was ne'er so wae,
To see sae mony brave men die.

Because they saved their countrie dear
Frae Englishmen : none were sae bauld ;
While Johnie lived on the Border-side,
None of them durst come near his hauld.

THE BLUIDY SARK.

THIS is almost the only composition of the ballad kind which we can trace to the pen of an early Scottish poet of reputation. It was written by Robert Henryson, of whom I have spoken in the Introduction; was preserved in Bannatyne's Manuscript, and printed in Mr David Laing's admirable compilation, "Select Remains of the Ancient Popular Poetry of Scotland, 1822." According to the prevalent taste of the poets of that period, it is allegorical in its nature.

I have altered the spelling slightly, so as to make the poem more easily intelligible to the reader. I suspect that Sir Walter Scott had this ballad in his mind when he wrote the "Lay of the Bloody Vest," which is inserted in the "Talisman."

THIS hundred year I heard it tauld,
There was a worthy King;
Dukes, Erles, and Baronis bauld,
He had at his bidding.
The Lord was auncient and auld,
And sixty years couth ring;
He had a daughter, fair to fauld,
A lusty ladye young.

Of all fairhead she bore the flower,
Was eke her father's heir;

Of lusty laites,* and high honour,
Meek, but and debonair.
She wonned in a bigly † bower;
On fold was none so fair;
Princes loved her, par amour,
In countrys o'er allwhere.

There dwelt a lyt ‡ beside the King
A foul Giant of ane;
Stolen he has the ladye young,
Away with her has gane;
And cast her in his dungering,§
Where light she might see nane;
Hunger and cauld, and great thirsting,
She found into that wane. ‖

He was the loathliest on to look,
That on the ground might gang;
His nails were like a hellis-crook,¶
Therewith five quarters lang.
There was nane that he overtook,
In right or yet in wrang,
But all in sunder he them shook;
The Giant was sae strang.

He held the lady day and night,
Within his deep dungeoun;
He wad not give of her a sight,
For gold nor yet ransoun;

* Pleasant demeanour. † Seemly.
‡ For a time. § Dungeon. ‖ Habitation.
¶ A crook for suspending vessels over a fire.

But gif the King might get a Knight,
To fight with his persoun,
To fight with him baith day and night,
Till ane were dungin' doun.*

The King gar'd seek baith far and near,
Baith by sea and land,
Of any Knight gif he might hear,
Wad fight with that Giant.
A worthy Prince that had no peer
Has ta'en the deed in hand,
For the love of the lady dear,
And held full true cunnand.†

That Prince came proudly to the town,
Of that Giant to hear,
And fought with him, his ain persoun,
And took him prisonere :
And cast him in his ain dungeoun,
Alane, withouten fear ;
With hunger, cauld, and confusioun,
As full well worthy were.

Syne brak the bower, had hame the bright‡
Unto her father, he ;
So evil wounded was the Knight,
That he behoved to dee ;
"Unlusum was his likame dicht,"§
His sark was all bluidie ;

* Overthrown. † Covenant.

‡ Used in the same sense as *the fair.*

§ *Sic* in original ; meaning, *uncomely was the array of his body.*

In all the world was there a wight
So piteous for to see?

The lady mourn'd and made great mane,
With all her meikle might:
"I loved never love, but ane,
That dolefully now is dight!
God send my life were frae me ta'en,
Or I had seen yon sight;
Or else in begging ever to gane
Forth with yon courteous Knight!"

He said, "Fair ladye, now maun I
Dee, trustly ye me trow:
Take ye my sark that is bluidie,
And hang it forrow you.*
First think on it, and syne on me,
When men come you to woo."
The ladye said, "By Mary free,
Thereto I make a vow!"

When that she looked on the sark,
She thought on the persoun;
And pray'd for him with all her heart,
That loos'd her of bandoun.
Where she was wont to sit full mirk,†
Within that deep dungeoun;
And ever when she was in quert,‡
That was her a lessoun.

* Before you. † Dark.

‡ In high spirits, or mirthful.

So well the ladye lov'd the Knight,
That no man would she take;
So should we do our God of might,
That did all for us make:
Which fullyly to death was dight,
For sinful manis sake;
So should we do, both day and night,
With prayers to Him make.

MORALITAS.

This King is like the Trinitie
Baith in heaven and here;
The Manis soul to the ladie;
The Giant to Lucifer:
The Knight to Christ, that died on tree,
And coft * our sinnis dear;
The pit to hell, with painis fell;
The sin to the wooere.

The lady was woo'd, but she said, nay,
With men that would her wed;
So should we writhe all sin away,
That in our breasts is bred:
I pray to Jesu Christ verray,
For us his bluid that shed,
To be our help on doomes-day,
Where laws are straightly led.

The Soul is Godis daughter dear,
And eke His handywark,

* Bought.

That was betray'd by Lucifer,
Who sits in hell full mirk ;
Borrow'd * by Christ, his angel clear,
Hain'd † men ! will ye not heark ?
For His love that bought us dear,
Think on the Bluidy Sark !

* Redeemed. † Preserved : kept in store.

YOUNG WATERS.

THIS fine old ballad is here given as it appears in Herd's Collection. It is highly probable that it may have been founded on some real event in Scottish history; but though various conjectures have been hazarded as to its origin, none appear sufficiently plausible to warrant their adoption.

ABOUT Yule, when the wind blew cool,
And the round tables began;
Ah! then is come to our King's court,
Mony a weelfavour'd man.

The Queen look'd owre the castle wa',
Beheld baith dale and down;
And then she saw young Waters,
Come riding to the town.

His footmen they did rin before,
His horsemen rade behind;
And a mantle o' the burning gowd
Did keep him frae the wind.

Gowden graith'd his horse before,
And siller shod behind;
The horse young Waters rade upon
Was fleeter than the wind.

Out then spoke a wylie lord,
Unto the Queen said he,
"O tell me wha's the fairest face
Rides in the companie?"

"I've seen lord, and I've seen laird,
And knights of high degree;
But a fairer face than young Waters',
Mine eyne did never see."

Out then spoke the jealous King,
(And an angry man was he),
"O, if he had been twice as fair,
You might have excepted me!"

"You're neither laird nor lord," she says,
"But the King that wears the crown;
There is not a knight in fair Scotland
But to thee maun bow down."

For a' that she could do or say,
Appeas'd he wadna be;
But for the words that she had said,
Young Waters he maun die.

They hae ta'en young Waters, and
Put fetters on his feet;
They hae ta'en young Waters, and
Thrown him in dungeon deep.

"Aft I have ridden thro' Stirling town
In the wind, but and the weet;
But I ne'er rade thro' Stirling town
Wi' fetters at my feet.

"Aft I have ridden thro' Stirling town,
In the wind, but and the rain;
But I ne'er rade thro' Stirling town,
Ne'er to return again."

They hae ta'en to the heiding hill,
His young son in his cradle;
And they hae ta'en to the heiding hill,
His horse, but and the saddle;

They hae ta'en to the heiding hill,
His lady fair to see;
And for the words the Queen had spoke,
Young Waters he did die.

KINMONT WILLIE.

THE incidents on which this very spirited ballad is founded are detailed at great length in the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border;" and as they differ little from the poetic narrative, it is unnecessary to repeat them. The hero of the ballad, William Armstrong, commonly called Will of Kinmonth, was a descendant of the famous Johnie Armstrong of Gilnockie; and his capture by the English was, according to the narrative of Spottiswoode, in open violation of the Border laws. This roused the ire of Sir Walter Scott of Buccleuch, then Warden of the West Marches, and led to the foray which is so vividly described. This happened in the year 1596.

The "fause Sakelde" of the ballad was Mr Salkeld of Corby Castle, whose death by the hand of the unlettered Dickie of Dryhope is a poetic figment. There is much humour in the answer of the mason lads about herrying a corbie's nest.

The exploit created an unusual sensation. Queen Elizabeth regarded it as a heinous affront, and insisted that Buccleuch should be delivered up. King James, with more than his usual spirit, replied that he might with equal reason crave the delivery of Lord Scroope, the English Warden, for the injury committed by his deputy, it being less favourable to take a prisoner than to relieve one that is unlawfully taken. But as the peace of the two countries became seriously threatened—the Borderers having been so inflamed by this audacious venture that forays on both sides became

frequent—and as James, who was then calculating upon the English succession, could not afford an open rupture with Elizabeth, the matter was referred to the judgment of commissioners of both nations, who met at Berwick; and at the personal request of James, Buccleuch went voluntarily to England, having doubtless obtained sufficient assurance that no evil consequences should follow. He was well received at the Court, where he was detained for a very short period, and dismissed with honour.

O HAE ye na heard o' the fause Sakelde?
O hae ye na heard o' the keen Lord Scroop?
How they hae ta'en bauld Kinmont Willie,
On Hairibee to hang him up?

Had Willie had but twenty men,
But twenty men as stout as he,
Fause Sakelde had never the Kinmont ta'en,
Wi' aught score in his companie!

They band his legs beneath the steed,
They tied his hands behind his back;
They guarded him fivesome on each side,
And brought him ower the Liddell rack.

They led him ower the Liddell rack,
And also through the Carlisle sands;
They brought him to Carlisle castell,
To be at my Lord Scroop's commands.

"My hands are tied, but my tongue is free,
And wha will daur this deed avow,
Or answer by the Border law,
Or answer to the bauld Buccleuch?"

"Now haud thy tongue, thou rank reiver!
There's never a Scot shall set ye free:
Afore that ye cross my castle yett,
I trow ye shall take fareweel of me!"

"Fear ye na that, my lord!" quo' Willie;
"By the faith o' my body, Lord Scroop," he said,
"I never lodged in a hostelrie yet,
But I paid my lawing afore I gaed!"

Now word has gane to the bauld Keeper,
In Branksome Ha' where that he lay,
That they hae ta'en the Kinmont Willie,
Between the hours of night and day.

He has ta'en the table wi' his hand,
He gar'd the red wine spring on hie—
"Now a curse upon my head," he cried,
"But avenged on Lord Scroop I'll be!

"O is my basnet a widow's curch?
Or my lance a wand of the willow tree?
Or my arm a lady's lily hand,
That an English lord should lichtly me?

"And have they ta'en him, Kinmont Willie,
Against the truce of Border tide,
And forgotten that the bauld Buccleuch
Is Keeper here on the Scottish side?

"And have they ta'en him, Kinmont Willie,
Withouten either dread or fear,
And forgotten that the bauld Buccleuch
Can back a steed or shake a spear?

"O were there war between the lands,
As weel I wot that there is nane,
I wad slight Carlisle castle high,
Tho' it were built o' the marble stane!

"I wad set that castle in a low,
And slocken it wi' English blood;
There's never a man in Cumberland
Should ken where Carlisle castle stood!

"But since nae war's between the lands,
And there is peace, and peace should be,
I'll neither harm English lad nor lass,
And yet the Kinmont freed shall be!"

He has call'd him forty marchmen bauld,
Were kinsmen to the bauld Buccleuch;
Wi' spur on heel, and splent on spauld,
And gloves o' green, and feathers blue.

There were five and five before them a',
Wi' hunting horns and bugles bright;
And five and five cam wi' Buccleuch,
Like Warden's men arrayed for fight.

And five and five like a mason gang,
That carried ladders lang and hie;
And five and five like broken men,
And so they reached the Woodhouselee.

And as we crossed the 'bateable land,
When to the English side we held,
The first o' men that we met wi',
Wha suld it be but the fause Sakelde?

"Where be ye gaun, ye hunters keen?"
Quo' fause Sakelde, "Come tell to me!"
"We go to hunt an English stag,
Has trespassed on the Scots countrie."

"Where be ye gaun, ye marshal men?"
Quo' fause Sakelde, "Come tell me true!"
"We go to catch a rank reiver,
Has broken faith wi' the bauld Buccleuch."

"Where be ye gaun, ye mason lads,
Wi' a' your ladders lang and hie?"
"We go to herry a corbie's nest,
That wons na far frae the Woodhouselee."

"Where be ye gaun, ye broken men?"
Quo' fause Sakelde, "Come tell to me!"
Now Dickie o' Dryhope led that band,
And the never a word o' lear had he.

"Why trespass ye on the English side?
Row-footed outlaws, stand!" quo' he:
The never a word had Dickie to say,
Sae he thrust his lance through his fause bodie!

Then on we held for Carlisle town,
And at Staneshaw-bank the Eden we crossed;
The water was great and meikle o' spait,
But the never a man or horse we lost.

And when we reached the Staneshaw-bank,
The wind was rising loud and hie,
And there the laird gar'd leave our naigs,
For fear that they should stamp and nie.

And when we left the Staneshaw-bank,
The wind began full loud to blaw;
But 'twas wind and weet, and fire and sleet,
When we cam' under the castle wa'.

We crept on knees, and held our breath,
Till we placed the ladders again' the wa',
And sae ready was Buccleuch himsel'
To mount the first before us a'.

He has ta'en the watchman by the throat,
He flung him down upon the lead—
"Had there not been peace between our land,
Upon the other side thou'dst gaed!

"Now sound out trumpets!" quo' Buccleuch,
"Let's waken Lord Scroop right merrilie!"
Then loud the Warden's trumpet blew—
O wha daur meddle wi' me?

Then speedily to work we gaed,
And raised the slogan one and a',
And cut a hole through a sheet o' lead,
And sae we wan to the castle ha'.

They thought King James and a' his men
Had won the house wi' bow and spear:
It was but twenty Scots and ten,
That put a thousand in sic a steer!

Wi' coulters and wi' fore-hammers,
We gar'd the bars bang merrilie,
Until we cam' to the inner prison,
Where Willie o' Kinmont he did lie.

And when we cam' to the inner prison,
Where Willie o' Kinmont he did lie—
"O sleep ye, wake ye, Kinmont Willie,
Upon the morn that thou's to die?"

"O I sleep saft, and I wake aft,
It's lang sin' sleeping was fley'd frae me!
Gie my service back to my wife and bairns,
And a' gude fellows that speer for me."

Then Red Rowan has hent him up,
The starkest man in Teviot-dale—
"Abide, abide now, Red Rowan,
Till o' Lord Scroop I take fareweel.

"Fareweel, fareweel, my gude Lord Scroop!
My gude Lord Scroop, fareweel!" he cried;
"I'll pay ye for my lodging maill,
When neist we meet on the Border side!"

Then shoulder high, wi' shout and cry,
We bore him down the ladder lang,
At every stride Red Rowan made,
I wot the Kinmont's airns play'd clang!

"O mony a time," quo' Kinmont Willie,
"I've ridden a horse baith wild and wud,
But a rougher beast than Red Rowan,
I ween my legs have ne'er bestrode!

"And mony a time," quo' Kinmont Willie,
"I've pricked a horse out ower the furs;
But sin' the day I backed a steed,
I never wore sic cumbrous spurs!"

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We scarce had won the Staneshaw-bank,
When a' the Carlisle bells were rung,
And a thousand men, in horse and foot,
Cam' wi' the keep Lord Scroop along.

Buccleuch has turned to Eden water,
Even where it flowed frae bank to brim,
And he has plunged in wi' a' his band,
And safely swam them through the stream.

He turned him on the further side,
And at Lord Scroop his glove flung he--
"An' ye like na my visit in merry England,
In fair Scotland come visit me!"

All sore astonished stood Lord Scroop,
He stood as still as rock of stane;
He scarcely dared to trew his eyes,
When thro' the water they had gane.

"He is either himsel' a devil frae hell,
Or else his mother a witch maun be;
I wadna have ridden that wan water,
For a' the gowd in Christentie!"

ALLAN-A-MAUT.

THIS curious old ditty, in honour of malt, which possibly may be the original of the popular ballads, still current in England and Scotland, under the name of "John Barleycorn," was preserved in the Bannatyne MSS., and has been printed in the collections of Messrs Jamieson and Laing.

WHEN he was young, and clad in green,
Having his hair about his e'en,
Baith men and women did him mene,
When he grew on yon hillés hie:
Why should not Allan honoured be?

His foster-father furth of the toun,
To vissy Allan he made him boune;
He saw him lying, alace, in swoun,
For fault of help, and like to die:
Why should not Allan honoured be?

They saw his head begin to rive,
Syne for a nourice they sent belive,
Wha brocht wi' her fifty and five
Of men of war full privily:
Why should not Allan honoured be?

They rushed forth like hellish rooks,
And every ane o' them had hooks;
They caught him shortly in their clooks,
Syne band him in a cradle of tree:
Why should not Allan honoured be?

They brocht him inward in the land,
Syne every friend made him a band,
While they might either gang or stand,
Never a foot frae him to flee:
Why should not Allan honoured be?

The greatest coward in this land,
Frae he wi' Allan enter in band,
Tho' he may neither gang nor stand,
Yet forty shall not gar him flee:
Why should not Allan honoured be?

Sir Allan's hewmont is a cup,
With a segg feather on its top;
Frae hand to hand so does he hop,
Till some may neither speak nor see:
Why should not Allan honoured be?

In Yule, when ilk man sings his carol,
Gude Allan lies into a barrel;
When he is there, he doubts nae peril,
To come on him by land or sea:
Why should not Allan honoured be?

Yet was there never so gay a gallan',
Frae he met wi' our master Allan,
But, gif he hauld him by the hallan,

Backward upon the floor falls he!
Why should not Allan honoured be?

My master Allan grew so stark,
While he made mony cunning clerk;
Upon their faces he sets his mark,
A blude-red nose beside their e'e:
Why should not Allan honoured be?

My master Allan I sair may curse;
He leaves nae money in my purse,
At his command I maun disburse,
Mair nor the twa part o' my fee:
Why should not Allan honoured be?

And last, of Allan to conclude,
He is benign, courtass, and gude,
And serves us of our daily food,
And that with liberalitie:
Why should not Allan honoured be?

THE RAID OF THE REIDSWIRE.

THIS ballad appears to have been early committed to writing; and therefore it is probable that it has undergone very little alteration. It refers to a Border encounter between the English and the Scots in the year 1575, during the regency of Morton; and I transcribe the following account of it from Maitland's "History of Scotland." It will be observed that he has made a mistake in the name of the English warden, substituting Forrester for Forster.

"Sir John Forrester, warden of the English side, and Sir John Carmichael of the Scottish, having met at a place called Red Swyre for the redress of some Border enormities, it happened that a bill was filed against an Englishman, whom, according to the Border laws, the Scots warden demanded to have delivered to him, till the plaintiff had satisfaction. But Forrester, either wearied with business or willing to shift his demand, answered, Enough had been done that day, but that the party injured should be indemnified at the next meeting. Carmichael insisting on present performance, they fell to foul words, which made their attendants draw their weapons, and let fly their arrows. A fight ensuing, the Scots gave back, as being inferior in number; but, receiving a reinforcement of some Jedburgh men, who came to attend on the warden, they renewed their attack upon the English, and in their turn prevailed. The pursuit lasted two miles. Sir George Heron, warden of Tindale and Rhedesdale, with twenty-four English, were killed. The warden himself, Francis Russel, son to the Earl of Bedford, Cuthbert

Collingwood, James Ogle, Henry Fenwick, Esqs., &c., being taken prisoners. This was equally displeasing to Queen Elizabeth and the Regent. He sent for the prisoners, and, using them with courtesy, despatched them instantly back, and obliged Carmichael to go to England, upon her Majesty's demand, whence, however, the business being impartially examined, he was dismissed with honour."

THE seventh of July, the sooth to say,
At the Reidswire the tryst was set;
Our wardens they affixed the day,
And, as they promised, so they met.
Alas! that day I'll ne'er forget!
Was sure sae feard, and then sae fain—
They came there justice for to get,
Will never green * to come again.

Carmichael was our warden then,
He caused the country to convene;
And the Laird's Wat, that worthie man,
Brought in that sirname weel beseen:†
The Armestranges, that aye hae been
A hardie house, but not a hale,
The Elliot's honours to maintain,
Brought down the lave‡ o' Liddesdale.

Then Tiviotdale came to wi' speed;
The sheriff brought the Douglas down,
Wi' Cranstoun, Gladstain, good at need,
Baith Rule Water, and Hawick town.

* Long. † Well appointed. ‡ Remainder.

Bonjeddart bauldy made him boune,
Wi' a' the Trumbills, strong and stout;
The Rutherfords, with grit renown,
Convoyed the town of Jedbrugh out.

Of other clans I cannot tell,
Because our warning was not wide.—
By this our folks hae taen the fell,
And planted pallions there to bide.
We looked down the other side,
And saw come breasting ower the brae,
Wi' Sir John Forster for their guide,
Full fifteen hundred men and mae.

It grieved him sair, that day, I trow,
Wi' Sir George Heron of Chipchasehouse:
Because we were not men enow,
They counted us not worth a louse.
Sir George was gentle, meek, and douce,
But *he* was hail and het as fire;
And yet, for all his cracking crouse,*
He rued the raid o' the Reidswire.

To deal with proud men is but pain;
For either must ye fight or flee,
Or else no answer make again,
But play the beast, and let them be.
It was na wonder he was hie,
Had Tynedale, Reedsdale, at his hand,
Wi' Cukdale, Gladsdale on the lee,
And Hebsrime, and Northumberland.

* Talking big.

Yet was our meeting meek enough,
Begun wi' merriment and mowes,
And at the brae, aboon the heugh,
The clark sate down to call the rowes.*
And some for kine, and some for ewes,
Called in of Dandie, Hob, and Jock—
We saw, come marching ower the knowes,
Five hundred Fenwicks in a flock.

With jack and spear, and bows all bent,
And warlike weapons at their will;
Although we were na weel content,
Yet by my troth, we fear'd no ill.
Some gaed to drink, and some stude still,
And some to cards and dice them sped;
Till on ane Farnstein they filed a bill,
And he was fugitive and fled.

Carmichael bade them speak out plainlie,
And cloke no cause for ill nor good;
The other, answering him as vainlie,
Began to reckon kin and blood:
He raise, and raxed† him where he stood,
And bade him match him with his marrows,
Then Tynedale heard them reason rude,
And they loot off a flight of arrows.

Then was there nought but bow and spear,
And every man pulled out a brand;
"A Schafton and a Fenwick!" there:
Gude Symington was slain frae hand.

* Rolls. † Stretched himself up.

The Scotsmen cried on other to stand,
Frae time they saw John Robson slain—
What should they cry? the king's command
Could cause no cowards turn again.

Up rose the laird to redd the cumber,
Which would not be for all his boast;
What could we do with sic a number?
Five thousand men into a host.
Then Henry Purdie proved his cost,
And very narrowlie had mischiefed him,
And there we had our warden lost,
Wert not the grit God he relieved him.

Another thro' the breiks him bair,
While flatlies to the ground he fell:
Then thought I weel we had lost him there,
Into my stomach it struck a knell!
Yet up he raise, the truth to tell ye,
And laid about him dints full dour;
His horsemen they raid sturdily,
And stude about him in the stour.

Then rose the slogan with ane shout—
"Fy! Tynedale to it!—Jedbrugh's here!"
I trow he was not half sae stout,
But ance his stomach was asteir.
With gun and genzie,* bow and spear,
Men might see mony a cracked crown!
But up amang the merchant gear,
They were as busy as we were down.

* Engine of war.

The swallow tail frae tackles flew,
Five hundreth flain * into a flight,
But we had pistolets enow,
And shot among them as we might.
With help of God the game gaed right,
Frae time the foremost of them fell;
Then ower the knowe without goodnight,
They ran with mony a shout and yell.

But after they had turned backs,
Yet Tynedale men they turned again;
An' it had not been the merchant packs,
There had been mae of Scotland slain.
But, Jesu! if the folks were fain
To put the bussing on their thies;
And so they fled, wi' a' their main,
Down ower the brae, like clogged bees.

Sir Francis Russel ta'en was there,
And hurt, as we hear men rehearse;
Proud Wallinton was wounded sair,
Albeit he be a Fenwick fierce.
But if ye would a soldier search,
Amang them a' were ta'en that night,
Was nane sae worthie to put in verse,
As Collingwood, that courteous knight.

Young Henry Schafton, he is hurt;
A soldier shot him wi' a bow:
Scotland has cause to mak great sturt,
For laming of the laird of Mowe.

* Arrows.

The Laird's Wat did weel, indeed;
His friends stood stoutlie by himsel':
With little Gladstain, gude at need,
For Graden kend na gude by ill.

The Sheriff wanted not gude will,
Howbeit he might not fight so fast;
Bonjeddart, Hundlie, and Hunthill,
These three, they laid weel on at last.
Except the horsemen of the guard,
If I could put men to availe,
None stoutlier stood out for their laird,
Nor did the lads of Liddisdale.

But little harness had we there;
But auld Bedrule had on a jack,
And did right weel, I you declare,
With all his Trumbills at his back.
Gude Edgerstane was not to lack,
Nor Kirktoun, Newton, noble men!
Thirs* all the specials I of speake,
By† others that I could not ken.

Who did invent that day of play,
We need not fear to find him soon;
For Sir John Forster, I dare well say,
Made us this noisome afternoon.
Not that I speak precislie out,
That he supposed it would be peril;
But pride, and breaking out of feud,
Gar'd Tynedale lads begin the quarrel.

* These are. † Besides!

THE WIFE OF USHER'S WELL.

THIS beautiful and touching ballad was first published in the "Border Minstrelsy." My friend, Mr Robert Chambers, subsequently recovered from recitation a few stanzas of great merit, evidently belonging to the ballad, and I have inserted two of these. He, however, considers it as a continuation, or rather integral part of another ballad contained in this collection, "The Clerks of Owsenford," and states that it was so recited in Peeblesshire. But the practice of the reciters was so loose, and their habit of mixing up one narrative with another so inveterate, that I cannot consider this as conclusive evidence for the unity of the two ballads, which appear to me essentially different, both in composition and in subject; and I have therefore kept them separate. I ought to add, that the two penultimate stanzas, which are highly pathetic, are from Mr Chambers' version.

THERE lived a wife at Usher's Well,
And a wealthy wife was she;
She had three stout and stalwart sons,
And sent them o'er the sea.

They hadna been a week from her,
A week but barely ane,
When word cam' to the carline wife,
That her three sons were gane.

They hadna been a week from her,
A week but barely three,
Whan word cam' to the carline wife,
That her sons she'd never see.

"I wish the wind may never cease,
Nor freshes in the flood,
Till my three sons come hame to me,
In earthly flesh and blood!"

It fell about the Martinmas,
When nights are lang and mirk,
The carline wife's three sons cam' hame,
And their hats were o' the birk.

It neither grew in syke nor ditch,
Nor yet in ony sheugh;
But at the gates o' Paradise,
That birk grew fair eneugh.

"Blow up the fire, now, maidens mine,
Bring water from the well!
For a' my house shall feast this night,
Since my three sons are well."

And she has made to them a bed,
She's made it large and wide;
And she's ta'en her mantle her about,
Sat down at the bed-side.

Up then crew the red red cock,
And up and crew the gray;
The eldest to the youngest said,
"'Tis time we were away.

"The cock doth craw, the day doth daw,
The channerin' worm doth chide;
Gin we be miss'd out o' our place,
A sair pain we maun bide."

"Lie still, lie still but a little wee while,
Lie still but if we may;
Gin my mother should miss us when she wakes,
She'll go mad ere it be day."

O it's they've ta'en up their mother's mantle,
And they've hung it on a pin:
"O lang may ye hing, my mother's mantle,
Ere ye hap us again!

"Fare-ye-weel, my mother dear!
Fareweel to barn and byre!
And fare-ye-weel, the bonny lass,
That kindles my mother's fire."

THE CLERKS OF OWSENFORD.

THIS ballad must have been very popular, as one version of it was recovered by Mr Buchan in the north, and another by Mr Chambers in the south of Scotland. Stall copies of it, with some variations, are still occasionally to be met with.

I have not been able to find any trace of a real story upon which the ballad may have been founded; but it seems probable that it belongs to the south country. Oxenford (pronounced Owsenford in Scotland) is a seat of the Earl of Stair, in the county of Mid-Lothian, and formerly belonged to the family of Macgill, who received the title, now dormant, of Viscount of Oxenford from Charles II. The ballad is evidently of a much older date, and must be referred to a period anterior to the Reformation. Mr Chambers has incorporated it with the foregoing ballad of "The Wife of Usher's Well;" but, with all deference to his judgment, I think there is intrinsic evidence that these are the compositions of different authors; and the accuracy of mere reciters is not to be trusted. For example, in Mr Buchan's version of this ballad, several stanzas, belonging to "Gil Morrice," are interpolated.

I'LL tell you a tale, or I'll sing you a sang,
Will grieve your heart full sair;
How the twa bonny clerks o' Owsenford,
Went aff to learn their lear.

They hadna been in Paris town,
A twelvemonth and a day,
Till the twa bonny clerks o' Owsenford
Wi' the Mayor's twa daughters lay.

As these twa clerks they sate and wrote,
The ladies sewed and sung;
There was mair mirth in that chamber,
Than in all Ferrol's land.

But word has gane to the haughty Mayor,
As he sate at the wine,
That the twa bonny clerks o' Owsenford
Wi' his twa daughters had lain.

"O have they lain wi' my daughters dear,
The heirs out ower my land?
Then by the haly rood I swear
I'll hang them wi' my hand!"

Then he has ta'en the twa bonny clerks,
Bound them from tap to tae,
Till the reddest blude in their body,
Out ower their nails did gae.

And word has gane to Owsenford,
Ill news bides never lang,
That his twa sons at Paris town,
Were bound in prison strang.

Then up spake Lady Owsenford,
And she spake tenderlie,
"O tak' wi' you a purse o' gowd,
Or even tak' ye three;

And gin ye borrow na hynde Henrie,
Bring Gilbert back to me!"

O sweetly sang the nichtingale,
As she sat on the wand:
But sair, sair mournèd Owsenford,
As he gaed to the strand.

And when he cam' to the prison strang,
He rade it round about,
And at a little shot-window
His sons were looking out.

"O lie ye there, my sons," he said,
"For owsen or for kye?
Or is't for a cast o' wanton love
Sae sair bound as ye lie?"

"We lie not here, father," they said,
"For owsen or for kye;
But it's for a cast o' dear-bought love
Sae sair bound as we lie.

"O borrow us, borrow us, father," they said,
"For the love we bear to thee!"
"Fear ye na that, my bonny sons;
Weel borrowed ye shall be."

Then he has gane to the haughty Mayor,
And he spake right courteously—
"Now will ye gie me my sons again,
For gold or yet for fee?
Or will ye gie me my bonny sons,
For His sake that died on tree?"

"I will not gie ye your sons again,
For gold nor yet for fee,
But gin ye bide till twal' the morn,
You'll see them hangit hie!"

In then came the Mayor's daughters,
Wi' kirtle, coat alone;
Their eyes they sparkled like the gowd,
As they tript o'er the stone.

"O will you gie us our loves, father!
O will you set them free!
Or, O will you take our ain twa lives,
And let our true loves be?"

He's ta'en a whip into his hand,
And lashed them wondrous sair;
"Gae to your bowers, ye vile limmers,
Ye'se never see them mair!"

Then out and speaks auld Owsenford,
A waefu' man was he;
"Gang to your bowers, ye lily flowers,
For a' this maunna be."

Then out and speaks him, hynde Henrie,
"Come here, Janet, to me;
Will you gie me my faith and troth,
And love, as I gave thee?"

"O ye shall hae your faith and troth,
Wi' God's blessing and mine!"
And twenty times she kissed his mouth,
Her father looking on.

Then out and speaks him gay Gilbert,
"Come here, Margaret to me;
Will you gie me my faith and troth,
And love, as I gave thee?"

"Yes, ye shall get your faith and troth,
Wi' God's blessing and mine!"
And twenty times she kissed his mouth,
Her father looking on.

* * * * *

"Ye'll take aff your twa black hats,
And lay them on that stane;
That nane may ken that ye are clerks,
Till that ye're putten down." *

* Put to death.

THE HARPER OF LOCHMABEN.

THE following version of this Border ballad appeared originally in Johnston's "Museum." It differs in some respects from that contained in the "Border Minstrelsy," and is the more perfect of the two.

O HEARD ye of a silly blind harper,
Liv'd long in Lochmaben town;
How he did gang to fair England,
To steal King Henry's wanton brown?

But first he gaed to his gudewife,
Wi' a' the speed that he could thole:
"This wark," quo' he, "will never wark,
Without a mare that has a foal."

Quo' she; "Thou has a gude grey mare,
That'll rin o'er hills baith low and hie;
Gae, tak' the grey mare in thy hand,
And leave the foal at hame wi' me.

"And tak' a halter in thy hose,
And o' thy purpose dinna fail;
But wap it o'er the wanton's nose,
And tie him to the grey mare's tail.

"Syne ca' her out at the back yett,
O'er moss, and muir, and ilka dale;
For she'll ne'er let the wanton bite,
Till she come back to her ain foal."

So he is up to England gane,
Even as fast as he can hie;
Till he cam' to King Henry's yett,
And wha was there but King Henry?

"Come in," quo' he, "thou silly blind harper,
And of thy harping let me hear."
"O, by my sooth," quo' the silly blind harper,
"I'd rather hae stabling for my mare."

The King looks o'er his left shoulder,
And says unto his stable groom;
"Gae, tak' the silly poor harper's mare,
And tie her side my wanton brown."

And ay he harpit, and ay he carpit,
Till a' the Lords gaed thro' the floor;
They thought the music was sae sweet,
That they forgat the stable door.

And ay he harpit, and ay he carpit,
Till a' the nobles were sound asleep;
Then quietly he took aff his shoon,
And saftly down the stair did creep.

Syne to the stable door he hies,
Wi' tread as light as light could be;
And when he opened and gaed in,
There he fand thirty good steeds and three.

He took the halter frae his hose,
And of his purpose didna fail;
He slip'd it o'er the wanton's nose,
And tied it to his grey mare's tail.

He ca'd her out at the back yett,
O'er moss, and muir, and ilka dale;
And she loot ne'er the wanton bite,
But held him ganging at her tail.

The grey mare was right swift o' foot,
And didna fail to find the way;
For she was at Lochmaben yett,
Fu' lang three hours ere it was day.

When she cam' to the harper's door,
There she gied mony a nicher and snear;
"Rise," quo' the wife, "thou lazy lass,
Let in thy master and his mare."

Then up she raise, put on her claise,
And looked out through the lock-hole;
"O, by my sooth," then quoth the lass,
"Our mare has gotten a braw big foal!"

"Come haud thy peace, thou foolish lass,
The moon's but glancing in thy e'e;"
"I'll wad my haill fee against a groat,
It's bigger than e'er our foal will be."

The niebours too that heard the noise,
Cried to the wife to put her in;
"By my sooth," then quoth the wife,
"He's better than ever he rode on."

But on the morn at fair day-light,
When they had ended a' their cheer,
King Henry's wanton brown was stawn,
And eke the poor auld harper's mare.

"Alace, alace!" says the silly blind harper;
"Alace, alace, that I cam' here!
In Scotland I've tint a braw cowt foal,
In England they've stawn my gude grey mare!"

"Come, haud thy tongue, thou silly blind harper,
And of thy alacing let me be;
For thou shalt get a better mare,
And weel paid shall thy cowt foal be."

OUR GUDEMAN.

THIS curious and very humorous old ballad was recovered by Herd, and appeared for the first time in his collection.

I.

OUR gudeman cam' hame at e'en,
And hame cam' he;
And there he saw a saddle horse,
Whare nae horse should be.
"O how cam' this horse here?
How can this be?
How cam' this horse here,
Without the leave o' me?"
"A horse!" quo' she:
"Ay, a horse," quo' he.
"Ye auld blind doited carle,
Blind mat ye be!
'Tis naething but a bonny milk-cow
My minnie sent to me."
"A bonny milk cow," quo' he;
"Ay, a milk cow," quo' she.
"Far hae I ridden,
And meikle hae I seen,
But a saddle on a cow's back
Saw I never nane!"

II.

Our gudeman cam' hame at e'en,
And hame cam' he;
He spy'd a pair o' jack-boots
Whare nae boots should be.
"What's this now, gudewife?
What's this I see?
How cam' these boots there,
Without the leave o' me?"
"Boots!" quo' she;
"Ay, boots," quo' he.
"Shame fa' your cuckold face,
And ill mat ye see;
It's but a pair o' water-stoups
The cooper sent to me."
"Water-stoups!" quo' he;
"Ay, water-stoups," quo' she.
"Far hae I ridden,
And far'er hae I gane,
But siller spurs on water-stoups
Saw I never nane!"

III.

Our gudeman cam' hame at e'en,
And hame cam' he:
And there he saw a sword
Whare a sword should nae be.
"What's this now, gudewife?
What's this I see?
O how cam' this sword here,
Without the leave o' me?"

"A sword!" quo' she;
"Ay, a sword," quo' he.
"Shame fa' your cuckold face,
And ill mat ye see;
It's but a parritch spurtle
My minnie sent to me."
"A spurtle?" quo he.
"Ay, a spurtle," quo' she.
"Weel—far hae I ridden,
And meikle hae I seen,
But siller-handled spurtles
Saw I never nane!"

IV.

Our gudeman cam' hame at e'en,
And hame cam' he;
There he spy'd a pouther'd wig
Whare nae wig should be.
"What's this now, gudewife?
What's this I see?
How cam' this wig here,
Without the leave o' me?"
"A wig!" quo' she;
"Ay, a wig," quo' he.
"Shame fa' your cuckold face,
And ill mat ye see;
'Tis naething but a clocken hen
My minnie sent to me."
"Clocken hen?" quo' he;
"Ay, clocken hen," quo' she.

"Far hae I ridden,
And meikle hae I seen,
But pouther on a clocken hen
Saw I never nane!"

V.

Our gudeman cam' hame at e'en,
And hame cam' he;
And there he saw a riding coat,
Whare nae coat should be.
"O how cam' this coat here?
How can this be?
How cam' this coat here,
Without the leave o' me?"
"A coat!" quo' she;
"Ay, a coat," quo' he.
"Ye auld blind dotard carle,
Blind mat ye be;
It's but a pair o' blankets
My minnie sent to me."
"Blankets?" quo' he;
"Ay, blankets," quo' she.
"Far hae I ridden,
And meikle hae I seen,
But buttons upon blankets
Saw I never nane!"

VI.

Ben went our gudeman,
And ben went he;

And there he spy'd a sturdy man,
Whare nae man should be.
"How cam' this man here?
How can this be?
How cam' this man here,
Without the leave o' me?"
"A man!" quo' she;
"Ay, a man," quo' he.
"Puir blind body,
And blinder mat ye be:
It's a new milking maid
My mither sent me."
"A maid?" quo' he;
"Ay, a maid," quo' she.
"Far hae I ridden,
And meikle hae I seen,
But lang-bearded maidens
Saw I never nane!"

WALY, WALY.

THE following ballad is acknowledged to be one of the finest in the language. It appeared first in Allan Ramsay's collection, where it is marked as ancient; and certainly there is no internal trace of modern alteration. There is also evidence that it was composed before 1566; for there is extant a manuscript of that year in which some of the lines are transcribed.

It is of some importance to ascertain its date; because two or three verses are repeated in another ballad, which I shall place next in the series, founded upon an event which occurred subsequent to 1670; and, what is more remarkable, a verse from that ballad has found its way into some versions of "Waly, waly." In the second stanza, instead of the following,

"O wherefore should I busk my head?
Or wherefore should I kaim my hair?
For my true love has me forsook,
And says he'll never love me mair."

These lines are substituted in more than one copy;

"When cockle shells turn siller bells,
And mussels grow on every tree,
When frost and snaw shall warm us a',
Then shall my love prove true to me."

The marked inferiority of the lines to those which they

displace, and to the remainder of the ballad, is of itself sufficient proof that they were composed by another author, and I am happy to be able to restore them to their proper place in a different ballad, which I have styled "The Marchioness of Douglas," and which now, for the first time, appears in print in an entire form.

O WALY, waly up the bank,
And waly, waly down the brae,
And waly, waly by yon burnside,
Where I and my love were wont to gae!
I leant my back into an aik,
I thought it was a trusty tree;
But first it bow'd and syne it brak',
Sae my true love did lightly me.

O waly, waly, gin love be bonny,
A little time while it is new,
But when it's auld, it waxeth cauld,
And fades away like morning dew.
O wherefore should I busk my head?
Or wherefore should I kaim my hair?
For my true love has me forsook,
And says he'll never lo'e me mair.

Now Arthur's Seat shall be my bed,
The sheets shall ne'er be pressed by me:
Saint Anton's well shall be my drink,
Since my true love's forsaken me.
Martinmas wind, when wilt thou blaw,
And shake the green leaves aff the tree?
O gentle death, when wilt thou come?
For of my life I am wearie!

'Tis not the frost that freezes fell,
  Nor blawing snaw's inclemencie ;
'Tis not sic cauld that makes me cry,
  But my love's heart grown cauld to me.
When we cam' in by Glasgow toun,
  We were a comely sight to see ;
My love was clad i' the black velvet,
  And I mysell in cramoisie.

But had I wist before I kiss'd,
  That love had been sae ill to win,
I had lock'd my heart in a case of gowd,
  And pinn'd it wi' a siller pin.
Oh, oh ! if my young babe were born,
  And set upon the nurse's knee,
And I mysell were dead and gane,
  For a maid again I'll never be !

THE MARCHIONESS OF DOUGLAS.

THROUGH the liberality of Mr Kinloch, who has given me free access to his valuable manuscript collection, I am enabled to lay before the public a complete version of a ballad which hitherto has only been given as a fragment, and which was supposed to relate to an incident quite different from that on which it is really founded. In Herd's collection five stanzas only were inserted. Mr Finlay subsequently recovered several additional verses, which he printed under the title of "Jamie Douglas," professing his belief that the heroine of the story was the wife of the dissolute Regent Morton. Mr Kinloch, in his "Ancient Scottish Ballads," published in 1827, gave a different version called "The Laird of Blackwood," accompanied by a note refuting Mr Finlay's historical hypothesis.

Shortly after this publication, Mr Kinloch recovered from recitation two very complete sets of the ballad; and he has prefixed an explanatory note, which I shall transcribe *verbatim*.

"The ballad relates not to James Douglas, Earl of Morton, as supposed by Mr Finlay, but to James Douglas, second Marquis of Douglas, who married at Edinburgh (7th Sept. 1670) Lady Barbara Erskine, eldest daughter of John, ninth Earl of Mar, the unfortunate heroine of the story, whom he repudiated on suspicion of adultery, after she had born him one child, James, Earl of Angus. The traditionary account of the cause of the separation is thus detailed by Mary Barr

(one of the parties from whom Mr Kinloch obtained the recitations), who had it, along with the ballad, about sixty years ago, from an old *dey*, or dairy-maid, at Douglas Castle. Mariotte Weir, heiress of Blackwood, married one Lowrie, who appears to have been chamberlain to the Marquess of Douglas; and on the birth of a son, he took the customary title of Tutor of Blackwood. Lowrie having, from unknown cause, conceived a violent hatred against the Marchioness of Douglas, contrived to poison the ear of the Marquess by insinuating false tales of her infidelity; and at last, by the plot of placing a pair of men's shoes below her bed (as detailed in the ballad), he succeeded in causing a separation, which was not only, it is said, heart-rending to the lady, but also to the Marquess, who, on the day of separation, was only withheld by the sarcasms and violence of Lowrie from seeking a reconciliation.

"The ballad was a great favourite of Archibald, Duke of Douglas, the son of the Marquess, by his second wife, Lady Mary Kerr, daughter of the Marquess of Lothian. The Duke used often to get the old dairy-maid above alluded to, to sing it to him; while he wheeled round the room in a gilded chair (the golden chair of the ballad), and muttered anathemas against Lowrie."

I have had no difficulty in framing the following version, for the two sets contained in Mr Kinloch's manuscript volume were obtained from recitation by persons residing in the same place, Lesmahago, and the verses are for the most part the same, with just such slight difference of words as might have been expected. The set, however, is more complete than the other, especially towards the termination. In both of them occur verses from "Waly, waly;" but they are so introduced, as to make it quite evident that the local poet had availed himself of pre-existing material which suited his purpose, without any scruple; a practice by no means uncommon.

I may also remark that my friend, Mr Robert Chambers,

had the advantage which I have enjoyed, of consulting Mr Kinloch's MSS.; and that he has inserted in his collection a collated ballad, in no less than four parts, bearing the same title as that which I have prefixed. His version, however, has been framed upon quite a different principle from mine. He evidently considers "Waly, waly," to be an integral portion of this ballad, and he has avowedly attempted to combine all existing versions. I am very far indeed from doubting his success in the production of an excellent poem; for it would ill become a younger editor to criticise the work of an experienced brother, whose knowledge of tradition is indisputable, and whose fine talents and great industry are universally recognised. But I want to rescue my old favourite of "Waly, waly" from desecration; for it really would be desecrated, and a sad slur would be thrown upon the integrity of ancient Scottish song, if it could be proved that a ditty which has been long esteemed as a gem of our minstrelsy, was a mere adaptation of certain verses excised from a ballad, the true subject of which was not ascertained until thirty years ago.

I WAS a lady of high renown,
As lived in the north countrie;
I was a lady of high renown,
When Earl Douglas loved me.

When we cam thro' Glasgow toun
We were a comely sight to see;
My gude lord in velvet green,
And I mysel in cramoisie.

When we cam to Douglas toun,
We were a fine sight to behold;
My gude lord in cramoisie,
And I mysel in shining gold.

When that my auld son was born,
And set upon the nurse's knee,
I was happy woman as e'er was born,
And my gude lord he loved me.

But O, an my young son was born,
And set upon the nurse's knee,
And I mysel were dead and gane,
For a maid again I'll never be!

There cam a man into this house,
And Jamie Lockhart was his name;
And it was tauld to my gude lord,
That I was in the bed wi' him.

There cam anither to this house,
And a bad friend he was to me!
He put Jamie's shoon below my bed-stock,
And bade my gude lord come and see.

O wae be unto thee, Blackwood!
And aye an ill death may ye die!
For ye was the first and the foremost man,
That parted my gude lord and me.

When my gude lord cam into my room,
This great falsehood for to see;
He turn'd about, and wi' a gloom,
He straight did tak' fareweel o' me.

"O fare-thee-weel, my once lovely maid;
O fare-thee-weel, once dear to me!
O fare-thee-weel, my once lovely maid,
For wi' me again ye shall never be!"

"Sit doun, sit doun now, Jamie Douglas,
Sit thee doun, and dine wi' me!
And I'll set thee on a chair of gold,
And serve thee kindly on my knee!"

"When cockle shells turn siller bells,
And mussels they bud on a tree;
When frost and snaw turns fire to burn,
Then I'll sit doun and dine wi' thee!"

O wae be unto thee, Blackwood!
And aye an ill death may ye die!
Ye war the first and foremost man
That parted my gude lord and me.

When my father he heard word,
That my gude lord had forsaken me;
He sent fifty o' his brisk dragoons,
To fetch me hame to my ain countrie.

The day that I was forc'd to go,
My bonny palace for to lea'e,
I went into my gude lord's room,
But, alas, he wadna speak to me!

"O fare-thee-weel, Jamie Douglas!
And fare-ye-weel, my children three;
I hope your father may prove more kind
To you than he has been to me!

"You tak every ane to be like yoursel,
And loving ilk ane that they see;
But I could swear by the heavens high,
I ne'er knew anither man but thee!

"O foul fa' ye, fause Blackwood,
And aye an ill death may ye die,
For ye was the first occasioner
Of parting my gude lord and me!"

When we gaed in by Edinburgh toun,
My father and mother they met me,
Wi' trumpets sounding on every side—
But alas, they couldna comfort me!

"Hold your tongue, daughter," my father said,
"And of your weeping let abee;
And we'll get out a bill o' divorce,
And I'll get a far better lord for thee."

"O hold your tongue, father," I said,
"And wi' your talking let me be;
I wadna gie ae kiss o' my ain lord's lips,
For a' the men in the west countrie!"

O, an I had my baby born,
And set upon the nurse's knee;
And I mysel were dead and gane,
For a maid again I'll never be!

JOHN SETON.

THIS north-country ballad narrates the death of John Seton of Pitmeddin, who was killed by a cannon-shot whilst bearing the royal standard at the Battle of the Bridge of Dee, in 1639. Versions of this ballad have been given by Mr Maidment in his rare and curious print, "The North Countrie Garland," and by Mr Buchan in his collection; and I have further had the advantage of consulting a copy annotated by the late Mr Sharpe. The copies generally agree, except towards the close, which, in Mr Maidment's version, is as follows:—

"The Highland men, they're clever men
At handling sword and shield,
But yet they are too naked men
To stay in battle-field.

The Highland men are clever men
At handling sword and gun,
But yet they are too naked men
To bear the cannon's rung.

For a cannon's roar in a summer night
Is like thunder in the air;
There's not a man in Highland dress
Can face the cannon's fire."

The language shows that these verses are of much later

composition than the bulk of the ballad, and they are quite inapplicable to the story, as Seton was no Highlander. I suspect them to be a fragment of some popular ballad on the subject of Culloden, where the artillery of Cumberland decided the fortune of the day. I much prefer the conclusion favoured by other copies, which is of historical interest, as referring to the celebrated Marquess (then Earl) of Montrose.

UPON the eighteenth day of June,
A dreary day to see,
The southern Lords did pitch their camp,
Just at the brig o' Dee.

Bonny John Seton o' Pitmeddin,
A bold baron was he,
He made his testament ere he went out,
The wiser man was he.

He left his land to his young son,
His lady her dowrie;
A thousand crowns to his daughter Jean,
Yet on the nurse's knee.

Then out and came his lady fair,
The tear stood in her e'e;
Says, "Stay at hame, my ain dear lord,
O! stay at hame wi' me!"

He turned him right and round about,
And a light laugh gae he;
Says, "I wadna for my lands sae broad
I stayed this night wi' thee."

He's ta'en his sword then by his side,
  His buckler by his knee,
And he's look'd over his left shoulder,
  Cried, "Soldiers, follow me!"

Sae he rode on, and further on,
  Until the third mile cross,
And there the Covenanters' shot,
  It dang him frae his horse.

His name was Major Middleton,
  That mann'd the Brig o' Dee;
His name was Colonel Henderson,
  That let the cannons flee.

Some rode on the black and grey,
  And some rode on the brown,
But bonny John Seton o' Pitmeddin
  Lay gasping on the ground.

Up then rides him, Craigievar;
  Says, "Wha's this lying here?
It surely is the Lord o' Aboyne,
  For Huntley was na here."

Then out it speaks a fause Forbes,
  Was riding frae Druminner,
"This is the proudest Seton of a',
  The rest will ride the thinner."

"Spoil him, spoil him!" cried Craigievar,
  "O spoil him presentlie;
For by my faith," said Craigievar,
  "He had nae gude-will at me!"

They've ta'en the shoes frae aff his feet,
The garters frae his knee,
Likewise the gloves upon his hands;
They left him na a flee.

Then they rade on, and farther on,
Till they came to the Crabestane;
And wha sae ready as Craigievar
To burn a' Aberdeen?

Then up and spake the gude Montrose
(Grace be on his fair bodie!)
"We winna burn the bonny bruch,
We'll even let it be!"

Then out and spake the gallant Montrose,
As he rade owre the field;
"Why should we burn the bonny bruch,
When its like we couldna build?

"I see the women and the children,
Climbing the craigs sae hie;
We'll sleep this night in the bonny bruch,
And even let it be."

ANNIE LAURIE.

THIS air is so very popular, that I am tempted to give the original words, the more so as they are not contained in our best musical repertory, Johnson's Museum. They were composed by Douglas of Fingland, in honour of Miss Laurie of Maxwelton, sometime previous to the Revolution of 1688; but in this instance the course of love did not run smooth, for the lady married Fergusson of Craigdarroch. The modern version is somewhat expanded, but it has been very skilfully constructed, as, with greater polish of diction, it retains the simplicity of the original. I have extracted the following verses from Mr Sharpe's Ballad-book.

MAXWELTON banks are bonnie,
Where early fa's the dew,
Where me and Annie Laurie
Made up the promise true;
Made up the promise true,
And ne'er forget will I,
And for bonnie Annie Laurie,
I'd lay down my head and die.

She's backit like a peacock,
She's breastit like a swan,

She's jimp about the middle,
  Her waist ye weel may span;
Her waist ye weel may span,
  She has a rolling eye,
And for bonnie Annie Laurie,
  I'd lay doun my head and die.

GIL MORICE.

THE ballad of Gil Morice, as given in Percy's "Reliques," is so widely known, and has been so much praised, that to impugn its accuracy as an ancient composition may seem almost heretical. Nevertheless, the learned Bishop has himself admitted that several of the stanzas may be "ingenious interpolations;" that they are so, no one versant in the structure of the old Scottish ballad-poetry can doubt. Such verses as the following betray their illegitimacy :—

"His hair was like the threeds of gold
Drawne frae Minerva's loome:
His lipps like roses drapping dew,
His breath was a' perfume.

His brow was like the mountain snae
Gilt by the morning beam:
His cheeks like living roses glow:
His e'en like azure stream.

The boy was clad in robes of greene,
Sweete as the infant spring:
And like the mavis on the bush
He gart the vallies ring."

Bishop Percy (whose extreme care and candour in editing deserve as much recognition as his skill) states that, in 1755,

the ballad of Gil Morice had passed through two editions in Scotland, and that, prefixed to both, there was an advertisement, setting forth, that the preservation of this poem was owing "to a lady, who favoured the printers with a copy, as it was carefully collected from the mouths of old women and nurses;" and "any reader that can render it more correct or complete" is desired to oblige the public with such *improvements*. The "improvements" are the verses which Percy suspects to be interpolations; and he farther expresses his opinion that the ballad "has received very considerable modern improvements; for, in the editor's ancient manuscript collection, is a very old imperfect copy of the same ballad, wherein, though the leading features of the story are the same, yet the colouring here is so much improved and heightened, and so many additional strokes are thrown in, that it is evident the whole has undergone a revisal."

Through the courtesy of the Bishop, Mr Jamieson obtained a transcript of the old imperfect copy referred to; and, by publishing it in his "Popular Ballads and Songs," he has proved beyond all doubt, that, previous to the publication in 1755, the ballad had been entirely recast, or rather rewritten, in a style suited to the prevalent taste of the age. In the old copy (which is so imperfect and fragmentary that it could not be restored by any process which an editor is entitled to use) Lord Barnard—a name, by the way, quite foreign to Scotland—appears as "John Steward," while the hero is denominated "Childe Maurice." The introductory dialogue with the foot-page is omitted, as is also the concluding recriminatory dispute between the Baron and his lady. Changes such as these could not be the effect of mere tradition: they must have been made deliberately; and though, doubtless, the artist, whoever he was, has painted a clever picture upon the old canvass, he has not succeeded in giving the semblance of antiquity to the patches which were purely his own. Take, for example, the dialogue with the page, as given in the "Reliques." Who that is acquainted with the

language of Scotland, as used in minstrelsy, can admit the authenticity of such lines as these?

"How can ye strive against the stream,
For I sall be obey'd."

"If ye refuse my heigh command
I'll gar your body bleid."

"Sen ye by me will nae be warn'd,
In it ye sall find frost.
The Baron he is a man of might,
He neir could bide to taunt,
As ye will see before it's nicht
How sma' ye hae to vaunt."

No wonder that such barefaced impostures should have roused the wrath of irritable old Ritson!

The well-known lines descriptive of the progress of the page,—

"And when he came to broken brigg,
He bent his bow and swam," &c.,

are undoubtedly ancient, but they do not belong to this ballad. They have been unceremoniously borrowed from "Lady Maisry," which has a place in the present collection. The conclusion is even worse. In the whole range of counterfeits, I know nothing so bad as the following:—

"Obraid me not, my Lord Barnard!
Obraid me not for shame!
Wi' that saim speir O pierce my heart!
And put me out o' pain.
Since nothing but Gill Morice head
Thy jelous rage could quell,
Let that saim hand now tak hir life
That neir to thee did ill."

It would, however, appear that the ballad, as printed in 1755, became very popular (no doubt owing to the success of Home's tragedy of "Douglas," which was brought out on the Edinburgh stage in 1756), and that it passed into recitation. But it did not remain unaltered; and its reappearance, after the lapse of years, in a modified form, is another striking instance of the changes which are wrought on oral poetry during the process of tradition. Mr Motherwell, whose "Minstrelsy" was published in 1827, gives a version of Gil Morice, taken from the recitation of a woman, then seventy years of age, who had committed it to memory in her youth. In that version many of the modernisms have disappeared altogether, and others are so altered that they might almost pass for snatches of an ancient ballad. The decorated copy was doubtless considered genuine by many for whose behoof such ballads as "Duncan," "Kenneth," and "The Childe of Elle," were composed; but the ear of the commonalty was too well trained to the measure, cadence, and diction of the old Scottish poetry, to be deceived. They took the ballad as printed, but, in the process of recitation, they rejected much that was evidently spurious, and altered more.

Mr Motherwell has also given a version, under the title of "Child Noryce," taken down from recitation in 1825, for which he claims high antiquity, and avowedly considers it as the true rendering, through tradition, of the original ballad. Such may be the case; and certainly it comes nearer the original in the possession of Bishop Percy, and published by Jamieson, than any other extant. But still the variations, not only in wording, but in form, are so great, that I hesitate to adopt it; more especially, because I am convinced that the printed copy of 1755 must, owing to the extreme popularity of "Douglas," have superseded any older version. Moreover, its diction stamps it as belonging to the lower class of ballads, whereas that given by Jamieson, however imperfect, manifestly belongs to the higher order.

Having said thus much, I am necessarily bound to explain the method I have followed in reconstructing this ballad. I have taken as a foundation the popular version recovered by Mr Motherwell, from which, as I have already said, many of the artificialities have disappeared. I have weeded from it every stanza which I consider to have been fabricated in the copy of 1755, replacing them, when that was possible, by stanzas from the imperfect old version printed by Mr Jamieson; and I have cancelled the larcenous verses transferred from "Lady Maisry." The ballad, thus divested of its gauds, is at all events simple and unexaggerated.

GIL MORICE was an Earlie's son,
His name it waxed wide;
It was na for his parentage,
Or for his meikle pride;
But it was for a lady gay,
That lived on Carron side.

"Where shall I get a bonnie boy
That will win hose and shoon,
That will gae to Lord Barnard's ha',
And bid his lady come?

"O Willie, my man, my errand gang,
And ye maun rin wi' speed,
When other boys rin on their feet,
On horseback ye shall ride.

"And ye will take this gay mantel,
It's a' gowd but the hem,
Bid her come speak to Gil Morice,
Bring naebody but her lane.

"And ye will take this Holland smock,
Her ane hand sewed the sleeve,
And bid her come to Gil Morice,
Speer nae bauld Baron's leave."

One while this little boy he rode,
Another while he ran,
Until he came to Lord Barnard's ha',
I wis he never blan'.*

He did not ask the porter's leave,
Tho' he stood at the gate;
But straight he ran to the big hall,
Where great folk sate at meat.

"Good hallow, gentle sir and dame!
My errand canna wait;
Dame, ye maun gae to Gil Morice,
Afore it be too late.

"And here it is a gay mantel,
It's a' gowd but the hem;
Ye maun come speak to Gil Morice,
Bring nae body but your lane.

"And here it is, a Holland smock,
Your ane hand sewed the sleeve,
You maun come speak wi' Gil Morice,
Ask nae bauld Baron's leave."

O aye she stampit wi' her foot
And winkit wi' her e'e,

* Stopped.

But for a' that she could say or do,
Forbidden he wadna be.

Out then spake the bower-maiden,
Was sitting by her knee;
" If this be come from Gil Morice,
It's dear welcome to me."

" Ye lie, ye lie now, bower-maiden,
Sae loud's I hear ye lie;
I brought it to Lord Barnard's lady,
And I trow ye binna she!"

" Then up and rose the bauld Baron,
And an angry man was he;
He took the table wi' his foot,
And kepp'd* it wi' his knee;
Till siller cup and ezar† dish,
In flinders they did flee.

" Gae bring me ane of thy cleiding,
That hings upon the pin,
And I'll awa to the gude greenwood,
And crack wi' your leman!"

" I would have you stay at hame, Lord Barnard,
I would have you stay at hame!
Ne'er wyte a man for deidly harm,
That never thought ye wrang."

But when he to the greenwood cam',
Naebody saw he there,

* Caught. † Maple.

But Gil Morice sitting on a stane,
Kaiming his yellow hair.

Gil Morice sate in the gay greenwood,
He whistled and he sang;
"O what means a' thir folk coming?
My mother tarries lang!"

"Nae wonder, nae wonder, Gil Morice," he said,
"My lady lo'es thee weel;
The fairest part o' my bodie,
Is blacker than thy heel.

"Yet nevertheless now, Gil Morice,
For a' thy gay beautie,
O nevertheless now, Gil Morice,
Thy head shall gae with me!"

He had a braid sword by his side,
Hung low down by his knee;
He struck Gil Morice on the neck,
Till aff his head did flee.

Then he's ta'en up that bluidy head,
And stuck it on a spear;
And the meanest man in a' his train,
Gat Gil Morice' head to bear.

The lady look'd owre the castle wa',
Wi' meikle dule and doune,
And there she saw the Baron bauld
Come riding to the toun.

Says he, "Dost thou know Gil Morice' head
If that thou dost it see?
Then lap it saft, and kiss it aft,
For thou lovedst him better than me!"

But when she looked on Gil Morice' head,
She never spake words but three;
"I never bare no child but ane,
And ye've slain him cruellie!"

THE MOTHER'S MALISON.

An imperfect version of this ballad, under the title of "Willie and May Margaret," was published by Mr Jamieson, who obtained it from recitation. Mr Buchan, in his "Ancient Ballads," has given an entire version under the title of "The Drowned Lovers," in which the maid is represented as sharing the fate of her lover. However proper this catastrophe may be for the ends of poetical justice, I cannot help thinking that the latter part has been added by some reciter, more especially as two stanzas of it seem to belong to "Annie of Lochroyan," and other three to "Burd Helen." I have, however, adopted three stanzas from Mr Buchan's version, which, with some slight alterations, appear to furnish the proper termination to the ballad. I have changed the title, simply because there is a superfluity of Willies and Margarets in our popular minstrelsy.

"GIE corn to my horse, mither,
Gie meat unto my man;
For I maun gang to May Margaret's bower
Before the night come on."

"O stay at hame now, my son Willie,
The wind blaws cauld and stour;
The night will be baith mirk and wild,
Before ye reach her bower."

"O though the night were never sae dark,
Or the wind blew never sae cauld,
I will be in May Margaret's bower,
Before twa hours be tauld."

"O gin ye gang to May Margaret,
Without the leave o' me,
Clyde's waters are wide and deep enough,
My malison drown thee!"

"He's mounted on his coal-black steed,
And fast he rade awa;
But ere he cam' to Clyde's water,
Fu' loud the wind did blaw.

As he rode o'er yon high high hill,
And down yon dowie den,
There was a roar in Clyde's water,
Wad fear'd a hundred men.

O he has swam through Clyde's water,
Though it was deep and wide,
And he came to May Margaret's door,
When a' were boune to bed.

O he's gane round and round about,
And tirled at the pin;
But doors were steek'd, and windows barr'd,
And nane wad let him in.

"O open the door to me, Margaret,
O open and let me in;
For my boots are fu' o' Clyde's water,
And frozen to the brim!"

"I daurna open the door to you,
I daurna let you in;
For my mother she is fast asleep,
And I daurna mak' nae din."

"O gin ye winna open the door,
Nor yet be kind to me,
Now tell me o' some out-chamber,
Where I this night may be."

"Ye canna win in this night, Willie,
Nor here ye canna be;
For I've nae chambers out nor in,
Nae ane but barely three.

"The tane of them is fu' o' corn,
The tither is fu' o' hay;
The third is fu' o' merry young men,
They winna move aff till day."

"O fare ye weel then, May Margaret,
Sin better maunna be:
I've won my mother's malison,
Coming this night to thee."

He's mounted on his coal-black steed,
O but his heart was wae;
But ere he came to Clyde's water,
'Twas half up o'er the brae.

He took the water recklessly,
Nor heeded of its force,
But the rushing that was in the Clyde,
Bore Willie from his horse.

His brother stood upon the bank;
Says, "Fye, man, will ye drown?
Fye, turn your horse's head up stream,
And teach him how to sowm!"

"How can I turn my horse's head?
How can I try to sowm?
I've gotten my mother's malison,
And it's here that I maun drown!"

THE BONNIE BANKS O' FORDIE.

THIS ballad is not contained in the older collections. The version which I give is substantially that of Mr Motherwell; but Mr Kinloch has printed a ballad called "The Duke of Perth's Three Daughters," which, though differing in details, is evidently the same. So far as I can discover, there is no tradition in the Perth family corresponding with the story. Even the version of Mr Motherwell is a collation. He states that it was compiled from two recited versions, differing but slightly from each other; and adds:—"This ballad is popular in the southern districts of Perthshire; but where the scene is laid the editor has been unable to ascertain. Nor has any research of his enabled him to throw further light on the history of the hero with the fantastic name, than what the ballad itself supplies." I conjecture that the name "Baby Lon" is a corruption by the reciters of "Burd-alane," signifying "the Solitary;" a very appropriate name for an outlaw. The ballad is now frequently sung with variations in the words, but I have for the most part followed Mr Motherwell's version, merely reducing the number of the sisters, for the sake of avoiding unnecessary repetition of verses, and with some alteration towards the close. I ought, however, to state my opinion that the ballad given by Mr Kinloch is one of real merit; so much so, indeed, that I felt great hesitation as to which version I should follow.

THERE were twa sisters lived in a bower,
Eh wow bonnie,
And they went out to pull a flower,
On the bonnie banks o' Fordie.

They hadna pu'd a flower but ane,
Eh wow bonnie,
When up there started a banish'd man,
On the bonnie banks o' Fordie.

He's ta'en the first sister by the hand,
Eh wow bonnie,
And he's turned her round and made her stand,
On the bonnie banks o' Fordie.

"It's whether will ye be a rank robber's wife,
Eh wow bonnie,
Or will ye die by my wee pen-knife,
On the bonnie banks o' Fordie?"

"It's I'll not be a rank robber's wife,
Eh wow bonnie,
But I'd rather die by your wee pen-knife,
On the bonnie banks o' Fordie."

He's killed this May, and he's laid her by,
Eh wow bonnie,
For to bear the red rose company,
On the bonnie banks o' Fordie.

He's ta'en the second ane by the hand,
Eh wow bonnie,
And he's turned her round and made her stand,
On the bonnie banks o' Fordie.

Says, "Will ye be a rank robber's wife,
Eh wow bonnie,
Or will ye die by my wee pen-knife,
On the bonnie banks o' Fordie?"

"I'll not be a rank robber's wife,
Eh wow bonnie,
Nor will I die by your wee pen-knife,
On the bonnie banks o' Fordie.

"For I hae a brother ayont the sea,
Eh wow bonnie,
And gin ye kill me, it's he'll kill thee,
On the bonnie banks o' Fordie."

"Now tell me, what is your brother's name,
Eh wow bonnie?"
"My brother's name is Burd-alane,*
On the bonnie banks o' Fordie."

"O sister, sister, wae be to me!
Eh wow bonnie,
O hae I done this ill to thee,
On the bonnie banks o' Fordie?

"The lift shall lie on yonder green,
Eh wow bonnie,
Or ever I shall again be seen,
On the bonnie banks o' Fordie!"

* "Burd-alane" was the cognomen given to the last survivor of the sons of Sir Richard Maitland, a renowned Scottish warrior, who, in 1296, defended his castle of Lauder against the English.

THE WIFE OF AUCHTERMUCHTY.

THIS is one of the best and oldest of the Scottish ballads of humour. It is contained in the Bannatyne Manuscript, and has been no way altered or corrupted. It is thought to be the production of one Sir John Moffat, a "Pope's knight," and may therefore have been composed about the year 1520.

IN Auchtermuchty there dwelt a man,
An husband as I heard it tauld;
Wha weel could tipple out a can,
And neither lovit hunger nor cauld.
While ance it fell upon a day,
He yoked his pleugh upon the plain;
Gif it be true, as I heard say,
The day was foul for wind and rain.

He loosed his pleugh at the land's en',
And drave his owsen hame at e'en;
When he came in he lookit ben,
And saw the wife baith dry and clean,
Sitting at a fire, beik * and bauld,
With a fat soup, as I heard say;
The man being very weet and cauld,
Between they twa it was na play.

* Warm.

Quoth he, "Where is my horse's corn?
My ox has neither hay nor stray:
Dame! ye maun to the pleugh the morn,
I shall be hussy* gif I may."
"Husband," quoth she, "content am I
To tak' the pleugh my day about;
Sae ye will rule baith calves and kye,
And all the house baith in and out.

"But sin' that ye will hussyskep ken,
First ye shall sift, and syne shall knead,
And ay as ye gang but and ben,
Look that the bairns fyle not the bed.
Ye'se lay a soft wisp to the kiln;
(We hae a dear farm on our head;)
And aye as ye gang furth and till,
Keep well the gaislings frae the gled."

The wife was up right late at e'en,
I pray God give her weel to fare!
She kirned the kirn, and skimmed it clean,
Left the gudeman but bledoch† bare.
Then in the morning up she gat,
And on her heart laid her disjune;
And put as meikle in her lap,
As might hae served them baith at noon.

Says, "Jock, be thou master of wark,
And thou shalt hauld, and I shall ca,'
I'se promise thee a gude new sark,
Either of round cloth or of sma'."

* Housewife. † Buttermilk.

She loosed the owsen, aucht or nine,
And hent a gad-staff in her hand :
Up the gudeman raise after syne,
And saw the wife had done command.

He ca'd the gaislings forth to feed,
There was but sevensome of them a',
And by there comes the greedy gled,
And licket up five, left him but twa :
Then out he ran, in all his main,
How soon he heard the gaislings cry,
But then or he cam' in again,
The calves brak' loose, and suck'd the kye.

The calves and kye met in the loan,
The man ran wi' a rung to redd ;
Then there comes an illwilly cow,
And brodit his buttock till it bled.
Then hame he ran to a rock of tow,
And he sat down to 'say the spinning ;
I trow he louted owre near the low—
Quoth he, "This wark has ill beginning!"

Hynd to the kirn then did he stour,
And jumlit at it till he swat ;
When he had fumblit a full lang hour,
The sorrow a scrap o' butter he gat :
Albeit nae butter he could get,
Yet he was cumbered wi' the kirn :
And syne he heated the milk owre het,
And sorrow a spark of it would yearn.

Then ben there cam' a greedy sow,
I trow he owed her little thank,

For in she shot her meikle mou',
And ay she winkit and she drank.
He cleiked up a crooked club,
And thought to hit the sow a rout;
The twa gaislings the gled had left,
That straik dang baith their harnis* out.

Then he bore kindling to the kiln,
But she stert up all in a low;
Whatever he heard, whatever he saw,
That day he had nae will to wow.
Then he gaed to tak' up the bairns,
Thought to have found them fair and clean;
The first that he gat in his arms,
Was a' bedirtied to the e'en.

The first it smelt sae sappily,
To touch the lave he did not greine;
"The devil cut aff their hands," quoth he,
"That fill'd ye a' sae fu' yestreen!"
He trailed the foul sheets down the gait,
Thought to have washed them on a stane;
The burn was risen great of spate,
Awa' frae him the sheets has ta'en.

Then up he gat on a knowe head,
On her to cry, on her to shout;
She heard him, and she heard him not,
But stoutly steered the stots about.
She drave all day until the night,
She loosed the pleugh, and syne cam' hame;
She fand all wrang that should been right;
I trow the man thought right great shame.

* Brains.

Quoth he, "Mine office I forsake,
For all the dayis of my life;
For I would put a house to wreck,
Had I been twenty days gudewife!"
Quoth she, "Weel may you bruik your place,
For truly I will ne'er accept it."
Quoth he, "Fiend fall the liar's face,
But yet ye may be blithe to get it!"

Then up she caught a meikle rung,
And the gudeman made to the door:
Quoth he, "Dame! I shall hauld my tongue,
For an' we fight, I'll get the waur!"
Quoth he, "When I forsook my pleugh,
I trow I but forsook mysell:
And I will to my pleugh again,
For I and this house will ne'er do well."

DICK O' THE COW.

THIS curious Border ballad was originally published in the "Hawick Museum," 1784; and was afterwards reprinted in the "Border Minstrelsy."

The almost universal adoption of nicknames upon the Border, must surprise and in some degree confuse an English reader. In all parts of Scotland it has been a common practice to sink the family names of landed proprietors, and to address them by their territorial titles; and in some instances peculiar courtesy-titles were given even to the eldest sons of the gentry. Thus in the last century, the eldest son of M'Leod of Rasay was styled Rona, which is the name of a small island belonging to the family. But, on the Border, a more complicated system of personal nomenclature prevailed. This cannot be explained better than by the following quotation from "Guy Mannering":—"Ye see, sir," said an old shepherd, rising and speaking very slow, "the folks hereabout are a' Armstrongs and Elliots, and sic like—twa or three given names—and so, for distinction's sake, the lairds and farmers have the names of their places that they live at—as, for example, Tam o' Todshaw, Will o' the Flat, Hobbie o' Sorbietrees, and our good master here, o' the Charlieshope. Aweel, sir, and then the inferior sort o' people, ye'll observe, are kend by sorts o' byenames some o' them, as Glaiket Christie, and the Deuke's Davie, or maybe, like this lad Gabriel, by his employment; as, for example, Tod Gabbie, or Hunter Gabbie." In this ballad we have a noted character called "the Laird's

Jock;" not a henchman or satellite, as the name would lead us to suppose, but the son of Armstrong, Laird of Mangerton, the head and chief of that name on the Border. Puddingburn House was another place of strength belonging to this predatory clan, who were the most noted of all the marauders. Frequent attempts were made to suppress them by the kings of Scotland. We have seen from the ballad of "Johnie Armstrong," how rigorously James V. dealt with one of their leaders; and in 1566, James Hepburn, earl of Bothwell, conducted an expedition against the Armstrongs and Elliots, when the Laird of Mangerton was taken prisoner, and Bothwell himself was desperately wounded in an encounter with John Elliot of the Park.

NOW Liddesdale has layen lang in,
There was nae riding there at a';
The horses are grown sae lither fat,
They downa stir out o' the sta'.

Fair Johnie Armstrang to Willie did say—
"Billie, a riding we will gae;
England and us have been lang at feud;
Aiblins we'll light on some bootie."

Then they are come on to Hutton Ha';
They rade that proper place about;
But the laird he was the wiser man,
For he had left nae gear without.

For he had left nae gear to steal,
Except sax sheep upon a lee:
Quo' Johnie—"I'd rather in England die,
Ere thir sax sheep gae to Liddesdale wi' me.

"But how ca' they the man we last met,
Billie, as we cam owre the knowe?"
"That same he is an innocent fule,
And men they call him Dick o' the Cow."

"That fule has three as good kye o' his ain,
As there are in a' Cumberland, billie," quo' he:
"Betide me life, betide me death,
These kye shall go to Liddesdale with me."

Then they have come on to the puir fule's house,
And they hae broken his wa's sae wide;
They have loosed out Dick o' the Cow's three kye,
And ta'en three co'erlets frae his wife's bed.

Then on the morn when the day was light,
The shouts and cries raise loud and hie:
"O haud thy tongue, my wife," he says,
"And o' thy crying let me be!

"O haud thy tongue, my wife," he says,
"And o' thy crying let me be;
And aye where thou hast lost ae cow,
In gude sooth I shall bring thee three."

Now Dickie's gane to the gude Lord Scroop,
And I wat a dreirie fule was he;
"Now haud thy tongue, my fule," he says,
"For I may not stand to jest wi' thee."

"Shame fa' your jesting, my lord!" quo' Dickie,
"For nae sic jesting 'grees wi' me;
Liddesdale's been in my house last night,
And they hae awa my three kye frae me.

"But I may nae langer in Cumberland dwell,
To be your puir fule and your leal,
Unless you gie me leave, my lord,
To gae to Liddesdale and steal."

"I gie thee leave, my fule!" he says;
"Thou speakest against my honour and me,
Unless thou gie me thy trowth and thy hand,
Thou'lt steal frae nane but wha stole frae thee."

"There is my trowth, and my right hand!
My head shall hang on Haribee,
I'll ne'er cross Carlisle sands again,
If I steal frae a man but wha stole frae me."

Dickie's ta'en leave o' lord and master;
I wat a merry fule was he!
He's bought a bridle and a pair o' new spurs,
And pack'd them up in his breek thie.

Then Dickie's come on to Pudding-burn house,
E'en as fast as he might dri'e;
Then Dickie's come on to Pudding-burn house,
Where there were thirty Armstrangs and three.

"O what's this come o' me now?" quo' Dickie;
"What meikle wae is this?" quo' he;
"For here is but ae innocent fule,
And there are thirty Armstrangs and three!"

Yet he has come up to the fair ha' board,
Sae weel he's become his courtesie!
"Weel may ye be, my gude Laird's Jock!
But the deil bless a' your companie.

"I'm come to plain o' your man, Johnie Armstrang,
And syne o' his billie Willie," quo' he;
"How they've been in my house last night,
And they hae ta'en my three kye frae me."

Quo' fair Johnie Armstrang, "We will him hang."
"Na," quo' Willie, "we'll him slay."
Then up and spak another young Armstrang,
"We'll gie him his batts,* and let him gae."

But up and spak the gude Laird's Jock,
The best fellow in a' the companie:
"Sit down thy ways a little while, Dickie,
And a piece o' thy ain cow's hough I'll gie ye."

But Dickie's heart it grew sae grit,
That the ne'er a bit o't he dought to eat—
Then he was aware of an auld peat-house,
Where a' the night he thought for to sleep.

Then Dickie was aware of an auld peat-house,
Where a' the night he thought for to lie—
And a' the prayers the puir fule prayed,
Were, "I wish I had amends for my gude three kye!"

It was then the use of Pudding-burn house,
And the house of Mangerton, all hail,
Them that cam na at the first ca',
Gat nae mair meat till the neist meal.

The lads, that hungry and weary were,
Abune the door-head they threw the key;

* Dismiss him with a beating.

Dickie he took gude notice o' that,
Says—"There will be a bootie for me."

Then Dickie has in to the stable gane,
Where there stood thirty horses and three;
He has tied them a' wi' St Mary's knot,*
A' these horses but barely three.

He has tied them a' wi' St Mary's knot,
A' these horses but barely three;
He's loupen on ane, ta'en another in hand,
And away as fast as he can hie.

But on the morn, when the day grew light,
The shouts and cries raise loud and hie—
"Ah! wha has done this?" quo' the gude Laird's Jock,
"Tell me the truth and the verity!"

"Wha has done this deed?" quo' the gude Laird's Jock;
"Sae that to me ye dinna lie!"
"Dickie has been in the stable last night,
And has ta'en my brother's horse and mine frae me."

"Ye wad ne'er be tauld," quo' the gude Laird's Jock;
"Have ye not found my tales fu' leal?
Ye ne'er wad out o' England bide,
Till crooked, and blind, and a' would steal."

"But lend me thy bay," fair Johnie 'gan say;
"There's nae horse loose in the stable save he;
And I'll either fetch Dick o' the Cow again,
Or the day is come that he shall die."

* Hamstringed them.

"To lend thee my bay!" the Laird's Jock 'gan say,
"He's baith worth gowd and gude monie;
Dick o' the Cow has awa twa horse;
I wish thou may na make him three."

He has ta'en the laird's jack on his back,
A twa-handed sword to hang by his thie;
He has ta'en a steel cap on his head,
And galloped on to follow Dickie.

Dickie was na a mile frae aff the town,
I wat a mile but barely three,
When he was o'erta'en by fair Johnie Armstrang,
Hand for hand, on Cannobie lee.

"Abide, abide, thou traitour thief!
The day is come that thou maun die."
Then Dickie look't owre his left shoulder,
Said—"Johnie, hast thou nae mae in companie?

"There is a preacher in our chapell,
And a' the live lang day teaches he:
When day is gane and night is come,
There's ne'er ae word I mark but three.

The first and second is—Faith and Conscience;
The third—Ne'er let a traitour free:
But, Johnie, what faith and conscience was thine,
When thou took awa my three kye frae me?

"And when thou had ta'en awa my three kye,
Thou thought in thy heart thou wast not weel sped,
Till thou sent thy billie Willie owre the knowe,
To tak three coverlets o' my wife's bed!"

Then Johnie let a spear fa' laigh by his thie,
Thought weel to hae slain the innocent, I trow;
But the powers above were mair than he,
For he ran but the puir fule's jerkin through.

Together they ran, or ever they blan;
This was Dickie the fule and he!
Dickie could na win at him wi' the blade o' the sword,
But fell'd him wi' the plummet under the e'e.

Thus Dickie has fell'd fair Johnie Armstrang,
The prettiest man in the south countrie—
"Gramercy!" then 'gan Dickie say,
"I had but twa horse, thou hast made me three!"

He's ta'en the steel jack aff Johnie's back,
The twa-handed sword that hung low by his thie;
He's ta'en the steel cap aff his head—
"Johnie, I'll tell my master I met wi' thee."

When Johnie wakened out o' his dream,
I wat a dreirie man was he:
"And is thou gane? Now, Dickie, then
The shame and dule is left wi' me.

"And is thou gane? Now, Dickie, then
The deil gae in thy companie!
For if I should live these hundred years,
I ne'er shall fight wi' a fule after thee."

Then Dickie's come hame to the gude Lord Scroop,
E'en as fast as he might hie;
"Now, Dickie, I'll neither eat nor drink,
Till hie hanged thou shalt be."

"The shame speed the liars, my lord!" quo' Dickie;
"This was na the promise ye made to me!
For I'd ne'er gane to Liddesdale to steal,
Had I na got my leave frae thee."

"But what gar'd thee steal the Laird's Jock's horse?
And, limmer, what gar'd ye steal him?" quo' he;
"For lang thou mightst in Cumberland dwelt,
Ere the Laird's Jock had stown frae thee."

"Indeed I wat ye lied, my lord!
And e'en sae loud as I hear ye lie!
I wan the horse frae fair Johnie Armstrang,
Hand to hand, on Cannobie lee.

"There is the jack was on his back;
This twa-handed sword hung laigh by his thie,
And there's the steel cap was on his head;
I brought a' thae tokens to let thee see."

"If that be true thou to me tells,
(And I think thou dares na tell a lie),
I'll gie thee fifteen punds for the horse,
Weel tauld on thy cloak lap shall be.

"I'll gie thee ane o' my best milk kye,
To maintain thy wife and children three;
And that may be as gude, I think,
As ony twa o' thine wad be."

"The shame speed the liars, my lord!" quo' Dickie;
"Trow ye aye to make a fule o' me?
I'll either hae twenty punds for the gude horse,
Or he's gae to Mortan fair wi' me."

He's gien him twenty punds for the gude horse,
A' in gowd and gude monie ;
He's gien him ane o' his best milk kye,
To maintain his wife and children three.

Then Dickie's come down through Carlisle toun,
E'en as fast as he could dri'e ;
The first o' men that he met wi',
Was my lord's brother, bailiff Glozenburrie.

"Weel be ye met, my gude Ralph Scroop!"
"Welcome, my brother's fule!" quo' he :
"Where didst thou get fair Johnie Armstrang's horse?"
"Where did I get him? but steal him," quo' he.

"But wilt thou sell me the bonny horse?
And, billie, wilt thou sell him to me?" quo' he :
"Ay ; if thou'lt tell me the monie on my cloak lap,
For there's never a penny I'll trust thee."

"I'll gie thee ten punds for the gude horse,
Weel tauld on thy cloak lap they shall be ;
And I'll gie thee ane o' the best milk kye,
To maintain thy wife and children three."

"The shame speed the liars, my lord!" quo' Dickie ;
"Trow ye aye to mak a fule o' me!
I'll either hae twenty punds for the gude horse,
Or he's gae to Mortan fair wi' me."

He's gien him twenty punds for the gude horse,
Baith in gowd and gude monie ;
He's gien him ane o' his best milk kye,
To maintain his wife and children three.

Then Dickie lap a loup fu' hie,
And I wat a loud laugh laughed he—
"I wish the neck o' the third horse were broken,
If ony of the twa were better than he!"

Then Dickie's come hame to his wife again;
Judge ye how the puir fule had sped!
He has gien her twa score English punds,
For the three auld coverlets ta'èn aff her bed.

And tak thee these twa as gude kye,
I trow, as a' thy three might be;
And yet here is a white-footed naigie,
I trow he'll carry baith thee and me.

"But I may nae langer in Cumberland bide;
The Armstrangs they would hang me hie."
So Dickie's ta'en leave at lord and master,
And at Burgh under Stanmuir there dwells he.

THE GAY GOSS-HAWK.

I AM not aware that any version of this ballad was ever printed before that given in the "Border Minstrelsy;" nevertheless it was a very popular one, and fragments of it are even now recited. I cannot agree with my friend Mr Chambers, who holds that Sir Walter's version is better than that published by Mr Motherwell: for, in my opinion, the former contains several transferred stanzas from other ballads, besides modern interpolations which are quite discernible; whereas the latter has a decided air of originality. Adhering to my view, that in collecting and collating the Ballads of Scotland, excision, rather than expansion, ought to be the rule, I have made this ballad shorter than it appears in any previous version.

"O WELL is me, my gay goss-hawk,
That ye can speak and flee;
For ye shall carry a love-letter
To my true-love frae me."

"O how shall I your true-love find,
Or how should I her knaw?
I bear a tongue ne'er wi' her spake,
An eye that ne'er her saw."

"O well shall you my true-love ken,
Sae soon as her ye see,
For of a' the flowers o' fair England,
The fairest flower is she.

"And when ye come to her castle,
Light on the bush of ash,
And sit ye there, and sing ye there,
As she comes frae the mass.

"And when she goes into the house,
Light ye upon the whin;
And sit ye there, and sing ye there,
As she gaes out and in."

Lord William has written a love-letter,
Put in under the wing sae grey;
And the bird is awa' to southern land,
As fast as he could gae.

And when he flew to that castle,
He lighted on the ash,
And there he sat, and there he sang,
As she came frae the mass.

And when she went into the house,
He flew unto the whin;
And there he sat, and there he sang,
As she gaed out and in.

"Come hitherward, my maidens a',
And prie the wine amang,
Till I go to the west-window,
And hear a birdie's sang."

She's gane into the west-window,
And fainly aye it drew,
And soon into her white silk lap
The bird the letter threw.

"Ye're bidden send your love a send,
For he has sent you three;
And tell him where he can see you,
Or for your love he'll die."

"I send him the rings from my white fingers,
The garlands aff my hair,
I send him the heart that's in my breast,
What would my love hae mair?
And at the fourth kirk in fair Scotland,
Ye'll bid him meet me there."

She's gane until her father dear,
As fast as she could hie,
"An asking, an asking, my father dear,
An asking grant ye me!
That if I die in merry England,
In Scotland you'll bury me.

"At the first kirk o' fair Scotland,
Ye'll cause the bells be rung;
At the neist kirk o' fair Scotland
Ye'll cause the mass be sung.

At the third kirk o' fair Scotland,
Ye'll deal the gowd for me;
At the fourth kirk o' fair Scotland,
It's there you'll bury me."

She has ta'en her to her bigly bower,
As fast as she could hie;
And she has drappèd down like deid,
Beside her mother's knee;

Then out and spak' an auld witch-wife,
By the fire-side sate she.

Says,—"Drap the het lead on her cheek,
And drap it on her chin,
And drap it on her rose-red lips,
And she will speak again;
O meikle will a maiden do,
To her true love to win!"

They drapt the het lead on her cheek,
They drapt it on her chin,
They drapt it on her rose-red lips,
But breath was nane within.

Then up arose her seven brothers,
And made for her a bier;
The boards were of the cedar wood,
The plates o' silver clear.

And up arose her seven sisters,
And made for her a sark;
The claith of it was satin fine,
The steeking silken wark.

The first Scots kirk that they cam' to,
They gar'd the bells be rung;
The neist Scots kirk that they cam' to,
They gar'd the mass be sung.

The third Scots kirk that they cam' to,
They dealt the gowd for her;
The fourth Scots kirk that they cam' to,
Her true-love met them there.

"Set down, set down the bier," he said,
"Till I look on the dead;
The last time that I saw her face,
Her cheeks were rosy red."

He rent the sheet upon her face,
A little abune the chin;
And fast he saw her colour come,
And sweet she smiled on him.

"O give me a chive of your bread, my love,
And ae drap o' your wine;
For I have fasted for your sake,
These weary lang days nine!

"Gae hame, gae hame, my seven brothers;
Gae hame and blaw your horn!
I trow ye wad hae gi'en me the skaith,
But I've gi'ed you the scorn.

"I cam' not here to fair Scotland,
To lie amang the dead;
But I cam' here to fair Scotland,
Wi' my ain true-love to wed."

JOHNIE FAA.

By far the most mysterious of Scottish traditionary tales is that referring to the abduction of a Countess of Cassilis by a certain John Faa, or Faw. The story is generally believed to have had some foundation; and yet, so far as I have been able to discover, there is no authentic record or notice of any such event. This would not be strange if the tradition were of remote antiquity, but it is not so; for the erring lady is uniformly identified with Jean Hamilton, fourth daughter of Thomas, first Earl of Haddington, born 18th February 1607, and married to John, sixth Earl of Cassilis, a most rigid and austere Presbyterian. By him she had one son and two daughters, one of whom, in advanced years, married the celebrated Bishop Burnet. She is said to have been previously betrothed to a Sir John Faw of Dunbar, who, under gypsy disguise, attempted, with her own connivance, to carry her off, but, being taken in the act, was summarily executed along with his followers. And it is said that there were recently extant certain carvings in Maybole Castle, wherein the Countess was subsequently confined, intended for the effigies of the unfortunate men who suffered.

Tradition has so very often, after minute investigation, been proved to be a true expositor, that I always hesitate to discard it; but, in this instance, I am deliberately of opinion that it ought not to be received. In the first place, it is remarkable that there is no trace whatever of any respectable

Scottish family in Haddington of the name of Faw. That was a pure gypsy name, and a very notorious one. For, in 1624, "Capitane Johnne Faa," along with seven others of his tribe, were brought to trial, as being "vagaboundis, sorneris, common thevis, callit, knawin, repute, and halden *Egiptianes*," and were sentenced to death, and suffered accordingly. Thereafter, "Helen Faa, the relict of vmq^le^ Capitane Johnne Faa," and eleven other gypsy women, were brought to trial for the same offence, and were sentenced to be *drowned*; but this cruel sentence was commuted by King James into one of banishment. The gypsies were by that time a proscribed people. As early as the year 1603, an Act of Parliament was passed ordaining them all to remove out of Scotland, under pain of death; and it was for disregarding that Act that Captain John Faa and his comrades suffered.

The history of the gypsies is of a most remarkable character. They spread over Europe in bands during the fifteenth century and later; giving themselves out to be Christian pilgrims expelled from their own country by the Saracens; and their leaders called themselves kings, dukes, counts, or lords of Little Egypt, and actually succeeded in imposing upon many of the sovereigns of Europe. In Scotland they were recognised by James IV. and James V., the latter monarch having issued a writ, under the Privy Seal, in favour of "Johnne Faa, Lord and Erle of Littil Egipt," admitting that he had legal authority over his followers, "conform to the lawis of Egipt," and ordaining the sheriffs throughout Scotland to aid him in enforcing that authority. Probably it was the detection of this gigantic hoax which led to the severe enactments against the vagabond tribe.

I dismiss, then, as an entirely fictitious personage, Sir John Faw of Dunbar. If the Countess eloped at all with a person of that name, it must have been with a genuine gypsy. That could hardly have happened previous to the year 1624,

for the Countess was then barely seventeen, and we cannot suppose her to have been at that age the mother of three children. It is, however, traditionarily said that the elopement took place when the Earl was absent from home, attending the Assembly of Divines at Westminster. I find that he actually was there, being one of three ruling elders sent from Scotland. This fixes the date as 1643. But by that time the Countess had attained the sedate age of thirty-six, at which period of life elopement is of rare occurrence, even though we should give the fullest weight to the influence either of glamour or of passion; and by that time there was not a gypsy left in Scotland. Some few stragglers were apprehended in 1636, and lodged in the jail of Haddington; but the Privy Council made short work with them, as appears from the following extract of their Act, dated 10th November of that year: "And whairas, the keeping of thame longer within the said Tolbooth is troublesome and burdenable to the toun of Haddington, and fosters the saids thievis in ane opinion of impunitie, to the encourageing of the rest of that infamous byke of lawless limmars to continue in their thievish trade, THAIRFORE, the Lords of Secret Counsell ORDAINS the Sheriff of Haddington, or his deputes, to pronounce Doome and Sentence of Death aganis so monie counterfeit thievis as are men, and aganis sa monie of the women as wants children; Ordaining the men to be HANGIT and the women to be DROWNED: and that such of the women as has children to be SCOURGED through the burgh of Haddington, and *Brunt on the cheeke*. And Ordains and commands the Provest and Baillies of Haddington to cause this doome be execute upon the saidis persons accordinglie." It is no way surprising that, for a long period after this, we have no trace of the residence of gypsies in Scotland.

I am therefore inclined to believe that the story has no real foundation, but that it was a malignant fiction, possibly trumped up to annoy Burnet, who had many enemies. I ought to apologise for the prolixity of this preface to such

of my readers as care little for antiquarian researches; but my apology is, that the story of Johnie Faa has long been the subject of considerable interest in Scotland.

THE gypsies cam' to our gude Lord's yett,
And O, but they sang sweetly;
They sang sae sweet, and sae very complete,
That down came the fair lady.

And she cam' tripping doun the stair,
And a' her maids before her;
As sune as they saw her weel-faured face,
They cuist the glamour ower her.

"O come wi' me," says Johnie Faa,
"O come wi' me, my dearie;
For I vow and I swear by the hilt of my sword,
That your lord shall nae mair come near ye."

Then she gied them the red red wine,
And they gied her the ginger;
But she gied them a far better thing,
The gowd ring frae her finger.

"Gae tak' frae me this gay mantle,
And bring to me a plaidie;
For if kith, and kin, and a' had sworn,
I'll follow the gypsy laddie.

"Yestreen I lay in a weel-made bed,
Wi' my gude lord beside me;
This night I'll lie in a tenant's barn,
Whatever shall betide me!"

"Come to your bed," says Johnie Faa,
"Come to your bed, my dearie;
For I vow and I swear by the hilt o' my sword,
That your lord shall nae mair come near ye."

"I'll go to bed to my Johnie Faa,
I'll go to bed to my dearie;
For I vow and I swear by the fan in my hand,
That my lord shall nae mair come near me.

"I'll make a hap to my Johnie Faa,
I'll make a hap to my dearie;
And he's get a' the sash gaes round,
And my lord shall nae mair come near me!"

And when our lord cam' hame at e'en,
And speered for his fair lady,
The tane she cried, and the other replied,
"She's awa' wi' the gypsy laddie!"

"Gae saddle to me the black, black steed,
Gae saddle and mak' him ready;
Before that I either eat or sleep,
I'll gae seek my fair lady."

And we were fifteen weel-made men,
Although we were na bonnie,
And we were a' put down but ane,
For a fair young wanton lady.

THE DOWIE DENS O' YARROW.

It is with much diffidence that I venture to deviate from the version of this fine old ballad, given by Sir Walter Scott in the "Border Minstrelsy." But as his was admittedly a compilation from various recitations, and as various sets of the ballad are still current in the district to which the song belongs, I hope I shall not be deemed presumptuous for having attempted a revisal. My reasons for the attempt are as follows: There are two distinct ancient Yarrow ballads, both popular among the peasantry. The older, and perhaps the better, is that which I am now prefacing, founded upon an incident which is historically true. The combat was between a Scott of Tushielaw and his brother-in-law, a Scott of Thirlestane, and the latter was slain. The dispute was regarding some lands which old Tushielaw intended to convey, or perhaps had conveyed, to his daughter. That ballad was taken by Hamilton of Bangour as the groundwork of a very beautiful poem, called "The Braes of Yarrow," which still commands admiration. The second ancient ballad, called "Willie's Drowned in Yarrow," is on a totally different subject, and of another class; but it is exquisitely simple and pathetic. It also was modernised, under the title of "The Braes of Yarrow," by the Rev. John Logan. The two ballads, being in the same measure, were, naturally enough, confounded by the reciters; and it seems to have escaped the observation of Sir Walter Scott that the distinguishing peculiarity of the older ballad, is the uniformity of the rhyme in every stanza, the word "Yarrow" being through-

out repeated. I therefore think that his fine introductory verse,

"Late at e'en, drinking the wine,
And ere they paid the lawing,
They set a combat them between,
To fight it at the dawing,"

cannot be genuine. And he has, further, introduced a verse which evidently belongs to the other ballad :—

"O gentle wind, that bloweth south
From where my love repaireth,
Convey a kiss from his dear mouth,
And tell me how he fareth."

Old David Herd, not being acquainted with a complete set of either ballad, printed a fragment, in which the above stanza occurred; and it is very probable that Sir Walter was not aware, when he compiled the "Minstrelsy," of the separate existence of "Willie's Drowned in Yarrow." Moreover, I must protest against the sponsorial act of calling the lady "Sarah," which, though convenient as a loose rhyme to "Yarrow," was better known in the land of Canaan than in Ettrick Forest. And, finally, I think the conclusion, as given by Sir Walter, is a mere tag of the reciters, and can be traced to the ballad of "Clerk Saunders."

A good version has been given by Mr Motherwell, but I have not followed it implicitly, as there is much material available for attempting a restoration. In this, as in some other instances, the termination may appear abrupt; but I prefer such abruptness to the repetition of the conventional conclusions of the reciters.

THREE lords were birling at the wine,
On the dowie dens o' Yarrow;
They set a combat them amang,
To fight it on the morrow.

"You took our sister to be your wife,
And thought her not your marrow;
You stole her frae her father's back,
When she was the Rose o' Yarrow."

"I took your sister to be my wife,
And I made her my marrow;
I stole her frae her father's back,
And she's still the Rose o' Yarrow."

He has hame to his lady gane,
As he had done before, O;
Says, "Madam, I maun keep a tryst,
On the dowie dens o' Yarrow!"

"O bide at hame, my Lord," she said,
"O bide at hame, my marrow;
For my three brethren will slay thee,
On the dowie dens o' Yarrow."

"Now hold your tongue, my lady dear,
For what needs a' this sorrow?
I'll soon come back to thee again,
From the dowie dens o' Yarrow."

She kiss'd his cheek, she kaim'd his hair,
As she had done before, O;
Gi'ed him a brand down by his side,
And he's awa' to Yarrow.

As he gaed up the Tennies bank,
I wot he gaed wi' sorrow;
It's there he spied nine armed men,
On the dowie dens o' Yarrow.

"O come ye here to hawk or hound,
Or drink the wine sae clear, O?
Or come ye here to part your land,
On the dowie dens o' Yarrow?"

"I come not here to hawk or hound,
Or drink the wine sae clear, O;
Nor come I here to part my land,
But I'll fight wi' you on Yarrow."

Four has he hurt, and five has slain,
On the bloody braes o' Yarrow,
Till a cowardly man cam him behind,
And pierced his body thorough.

"Gae hame, gae hame, my brother John,
What needs this dule and sorrow?
Gae hame, and tell my lady dear
That I sleep sound on Yarrow."

As he gaed owre yon high high hill,
As he had done before, O;
There he met his sister dear,
Was coming fast to Yarrow.

"I dream'd a dreary dream yestre'en;
God keep us a' frae sorrow!
I dream'd I pu'd the birk sae green,
Wi' my true-love on Yarrow."

"I'll read your dream, my sister dear,
I'll tell you a' your sorrow;
You pu'd the birk wi' your true-love;
He's killed, he's killed on Yarrow."

THE WOOD O' WARSLIN'.

This ballad, of which there are various versions, is more commonly called the "Twa Brothers," but I prefer the other and older title, which means "the Wood of Wrestling." It has been thought that the melancholy occurrence on which it was founded is one recorded in the "Historie of the Somervilles," but this appears to me to be a strained conjecture. The circumstances are essentially different; and, moreover, the wording of the ballad shows that it belongs to the north country, whereas the Somervilles were a Lothian family, and the accident referred to, happened at the Drum, a few miles south of Edinburgh.

Mr Jamieson's version, besides being imperfect, was spoiled by interpolation. By inserting a stanza of his own, which represents the wound as deliberate, not accidental, he has, I think, destroyed the interest of the poem. Mr Motherwell's version is much better, but it has evidently been expanded by the reciters, who have mixed up with it part of the ballad of "Edward," which, in respect of terrible power, has probably no equal. The version given by Mr Sharpe, seems to me, from internal evidence, to be the least corrupted; but the rhyme is very rude. This I have amended, not by adding anything of my own, but by collating it carefully with the other extant versions, taking care to omit such stanzas as seem to me to have been either borrowed from, or suggested by the ballad of "Edward."

"O WILL ye gae to the schule, brother,
Or will-ye gae to the ba'?
Or will ye gae to the wood a-warslin',
And there we'll try a fa'?"

"It's I winna gae to the schule, brother,
Nor will I gae to the ba',
But I will gae to the wood a-warslin',
And it's there that ye maun fa'."

They warsled up, they warsled down,
Till John fell to the ground,
And there was a knife in Willie's pouch,
Gi'ed him a deidly wound.

"O lift me, brother, on your back,
Tak' me to yon burn clear,
And wash the bluid frae aff my wound,
And it will bleed nae mair!"

He's lifted his brother upon his back,
Ta'en him to the burn sae clear;
And he has washed his bluidy wound,
But aye it bled the mair!

"O tak' ye aff my holland sark,
And rive it, gair by gair,
And stap it in my bluidy wound,
And it will bleed nae mair!"

He's taken aff his holland sark,
And riv'd it, gair by gair;
He's stapt it in the bluidy wound,
But aye it bled mair and mair.

"O brother dear, ye'll lift me up,
Take me to Kirkland fair,
And dig a grave baith wide and deep,
And lay my body there!"

"But what shall I say to my father dear,
When he speirs for his son, John?"
"Say that ye left him at Kirkland fair,
Learning in schule alone."

"But what shall I say to our ae sister,
When its—Willie, O where is John?"
"Ye'll say ye left him in Kirkland fair,
The green grass growing aboon."

"And O what shall I say to our mother dear,
'Gin she cry—Why tarries my John?"
"O tell her I lie in Kirkland fair,
And hame will I never come!"

BINNORIE.

THE following version of this very popular ballad differs considerably from that printed, under the title of "The Cruel Sister," in the "Border Minstrelsy." I have for the most part adhered to Mr Jamieson's copy, comparing it, however, with other editions.

Some versions have a totally different refrain. One, mentioned by Sir Walter Scott, ran thus :—

"O sister, sister, reach thy hand!
Hey ho, my Nanny O;
And you shall be heir of all my land,
While the swan swims bonny O."

Another is as follows :—

"There were twa sisters sat in a bower,
Edinburgh, Edinburgh;
There were twa sisters sat in a bower,
Stirling for aye;
There were twa sisters sat in a bower,
There cam' a knight to be their wooer,
Bonny St Johnstoun stands upon Tay."

I observe that a burden of the same kind has been attached by Mr Buchan to his version of "The Cruel Mother."

THERE were twa sisters lived in a bower;
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
The youngest o' them, O she was a flower,
By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie.

There came a squire frae the west,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
He lo'ed them baith, but the youngest best,
By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie.

He courted the eldest with glove and ring,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
But he lo'ed the youngest abune a' thing,
By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie.

The eldest she was vexed sair,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
And sore envied her sister fair,
By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie.

The eldest said to the youngest ane,
Binnorie, O Binnorie,
"Will ye see our father's ships come in?"
By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie.

She's ta'en her by the lily hand;
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
And led her down to the river strand,
By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie.

The youngest stood upon a stane ;
Binnorie, O Binnorie ;
The eldest came and pushed her in,
By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie.

"O sister, sister, reach your hand,
Binnorie, O Binnorie ;
And ye shall be heir of half my land ;"
By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie.

"O sister, I'll not reach my hand,
Binnorie, O Binnorie ;
And I'll be the heir of all your land ;
By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie.

"Shame fa' the hand that I should take,
Binnorie, O Binnorie ;
It has twined me and my world's make :"
By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie.

"O sister, sister, reach your glove,
Binnorie, O Binnorie ;
And sweet William shall be your love ;"
By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie.

"Sink on, nor hope for hand or glove,
Binnorie, O Binnorie ;
And sweet William shall better be my love,
By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie.

"Your cherry cheeks, and your yellow hair,
Binnorie, O Binnorie ;
Had gar'd me gang maiden evermair,"
By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie.

Sometimes she sank, and sometimes she swam,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
Until she cam' to the miller's dam;
By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie.

The miller's daughter was baking bread,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
And gaed for water as she had need,
By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie.

"O father, father, draw your dam!
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
For there is a lady or milk-white swan,
By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie."

The miller hasted and drew his dam,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
And there he found a drown'd woman,
By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie.

Ye couldna see her yellow hair;
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
For gowd and pearls that were sae rare;
By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie.

Ye couldna see her middle sma',
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
Her gowden girdle was sae braw,
By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie.

Ye couldna see her lilie feet,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
Her gowden fringes were sae deep,
By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie.

"Sair will they be, whae'er they be,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
The hearts that live to weep for thee!"
By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie.

There came a harper passing by,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
The sweet pale face he chanced to spy,
By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie.

And when he looked that lady on,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
He sighed and made a heavy moan,
By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie.

He has ta'en three locks o' her yellow hair,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
And wi' them strung his harp sae rare,
By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie.

He brought the harp to her father's hall;
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
And there was the court assembled all;
By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie.

He set the harp upon a stane,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
And it began to play alane,
By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie.

"O yonder sits my father, the king,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
And yonder sits my mother, the queen;
By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie.

"And yonder stands my brother Hugh,
Binnorie, O Binnorie,
And by him my William sweet and true;"
By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie.

But the last tune that the harp played then,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
Was, "Woe to my sister, false Helen!"
By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie.

THE WITCH-MOTHER.

Two versions of this curious old ballad have appeared. One, contained in the "Border Minstrelsy," is called "Willie's Ladye;" the other, in Mr Jamieson's collection, is entitled "Sweet Willy." These titles being arbitrary, I have substituted another, for the sake of distinctly marking the ballad; as we have already a superfluity of proper names, which has often bred confusion.

In his prefatory notice, Sir Walter says that he had seen a copy of this ballad intended by Mr Jamieson for publication, but that it contained some modern stanzas. But, on comparing the two versions, I find them to be very nearly the same, except that, according to my judgment, the arrangement of the lines in Mr Jamieson's copy is the more natural and intelligible. I have therefore followed it.

In this ballad a singular character appears; the "Billy Blind," who was neither more nor less than that noted Lar of Scotland, the Brownie. He seems to have been peculiarly useful in detecting witchcraft or imposition; for we find him, in another ballad, engaged in a similar service.

SWEET Willie's ta'en him o'er the faem,
He's woo'd a wife, and brought her hame;
He's woo'd her for her yellow hair,
But his mother's wrought her meikle care;
And meikle dolour gar'd her drie,
For lighter can she never be;

But in her bower she sits wi' pain,
And Willie mourns for her in vain.

Now to his mother he is gane,
That vile rank witch o' vilest kind;
He says, "My lady has a girdle,
Its a' red gowd unto the middle,
And aye at ilka silver hem
Hings fifty siller bells and ten;
That gudely gift shall be your ain,
And let her be lighter o' her young bairn."

"O' her young bairn she's never be lighter,
Nor in her bower to shine the brighter;
But she shall die and turn to clay,
And you shall wed anither May."
"Anither May I'll never wed,
Anither May I'll ne'er bring hame!"
But, sighing, said that weary wight,
"I wish my days were at an end!"

He did him till his mother again,
That vile rank witch o' vilest kind;
Says he: "My lady has a steed,
The like o' him's na in the lands o' Leed;
For he is gowden shod before,
And he is gowden shod behin';
And at ilka tett o' that horse's mane,
There's a gowden chess and bell ringing.

"That gudely gift shall be your ain,
And let her be lighter o' her young bairn."
"O' her young bairn she's never be lighter,
Nor in her bower to shine the brighter;

But she shall die and go to clay,
And you shall wed another May."

"Another May I'll never wed,
Another May I'll ne'er bring hame!"
But, sighing, says that weary wight,
"I wish my life were at an end!"
Then out and spak the Billy Blin',
He spak ay in a gude time;
"Now gae you to the market-place,
And buy you there a loaf o' wace.*

"Ye'll shape it bairn and bairnly like,
And in twa glazen e'en ye'll pit;
And do you to your mother then,
And bid her come to the Christ'ning;
For dear's the boy he's been to you:
Then watch ye weel what she shall do;
And do you stand a little forbye,
And listen well what she will say."

He did him to the market-place,
And there he bought a loaf o' wace;
He shaped it bairn and bairnly like,
And in twa glazen e'en he pat.
He did him till his mother then,
And bade her to his boy's Christ'ning;
And he did stand a little forbye,
And noticed weel what she did say.

"O wha has loos'd the nine witch-knots,
That was amang that lady's locks?

* Wax.

And wha's ta'en out the kaims o' care,
That was amang that lady's hair?
And wha has kill'd the master kid,
That ran aneath that lady's bed?
And wha has loos'd her left foot shee,
And let that lady lighter be?"

O Willie has loos'd the nine witch-knots,
Were tied amang his lady's locks;
And Willie's ta'en out the kaims o' care
Were set amang his lady's hair;
And Willie's kill'd the master kid,
That ran aneath his lady's bed;
And Willie's loos'd her left foot shee,
And letten his lady lighter be!

THE GRAY COCK.

THIS very popular ballad was first printed in Herd's Collection, and has been set to music in Johnson's Museum.

"O SAW ye my father, or saw ye my mother,
Or saw ye my true-love John?"
"I saw na your father, I saw na your mother,
But I saw your true-love John."

"It's now ten at night, and the stars gie nae light,
And the bells they ring, ding dong;
He's met wi' some delay, that causeth him to stay,
But he will be here ere long."

The surly auld carle, did naething but snarl,
And Johnie's face it grew red;
Yet tho' he often sigh'd, he ne'er a word reply'd,
Till all were asleep in bed.

Then up Johnie rose, and to the door he goes,
And gently tirled the pin;
The lassie taking tent, unto the door she went,
And she opened and let him in.

"And are ye come at last, and do I hold ye fast?
And is my Johnie true?"
"I hae nae time to tell; but sae lang's I like mysel',
Sae lang shall I love you."

"Flee, flee up, my bonny gray cock,
And craw when it is day;
Your neck shall be like the bonny beaten gold,
And your wings of the silver gray!"

The cock proved false, and untrue he was,
For he crew an hour ower soon;
The lassie thought it day, when she sent her love away,
And it was but a blink of the moon.

JAMIE TELFER.

THIS very spirited ballad gives a concise account of one of those forays so common on the Borders during the reigns of Mary and James VI. In this instance the English were the aggressors; and the "warning of the waters," in order to call out the martial population for the recovery of the plundered stock, is described with much animation. As old Wat of Harden is introduced personally as an actor, we may conclude that the ballad dates about the middle of the sixteenth century. The following copy is almost *verbatim* the same with that given in the "Border Minstrelsy."

IT fell about the Martinmas tide,
When our Border steeds get corn and hay,
The captain of Bewcastle hath boun' him to ride
And he's ower to Tividale to drive a prey.

The first ae guide that they met wi',
It was high up Hardhaughswire;
The second guide that they met wi',
It was laigh down in Borthwick water.

"What tidings, what tidings, my trusty guide?"
"Nae tidings, nae tidings, I hae to thee;
But, gin ye'll gae to the fair Dodhead,
Mony a cow's calf I'll let thee see."

And whan they cam to the fair Dodhead,
Right hastily they climbed the peel;
They loosed the kye out, ane and a',
And ranshackled the house right weel.

Now Jamie Telfer's heart was sair,
The tear aye rowing in his e'e;
He pled wi' the captain to hae his gear,
Or else revenged he wad be.

The captain turned him round and leugh;
Said—"Man, there's naething in thy house,
But ae auld sword without a sheath,
That hardly now wad fell a mouse!"

The sun was na up, but the moon was down,
It was the griming of a new fa'n snaw,
Jamie Telfer has run ten miles a-foot,
Between the Dodhead and the Stobs's Ha'.

And whan he cam to the fair tower yett,
He shouted loud, and weel cried he,
Till out bespak auld Gibby Elliot—
"Whae's this that brings the fray to me?"

"It's I, Jamie Telfer o' the fair Dodhead,
And a harried man I think I be!
There's naething left at the fair Dodhead,
But a waefu' wife and bairnies three."

"Gae seek your succour at Branksome Ha',
For succour ye'se get nane frae me!
Gae seek your succour where ye paid black mail,
For, man! ye ne'er paid money to me."

Jamie Telfer has turned him round about,
I wat the tear blinded his e'e—
"I'll ne'er pay mail to Eliiot again,
And the fair Dodhead I'll never see!"

He has turned him to the Tiviot side,
E'en as fast as he could dri'e,
Till he cam to the Coultart cleugh,
And there he shouted baith loud and hie.

Then up bespake him auld Jock Grieve—
"Whae's this that brings the fray to me?"
"It's I, Jamie Telfer o' the fair Dodhead,
A harried man I trow I be.

"There's naething left in the fair Dodhead,
But a greeting wife and bairnies three,
And sax poor calves stand in the sta',
A' routing loud for their minnie."

"Alack and wae!" quo' auld Jock Grieve,
"Alack! my heart is sair for thee!
For I was married on the elder sister,
And you on the youngest of a' the three."

Then he has ta'en out a bonny black,
Was right weel fed wi' corn and hay,
And he's set Jamie Telfer on his back,
To the Catslockhill to tak' the fray.

And whan he cam to the Catslockhill,
He shouted loud and weel cried he,
Till out and spak him William's Wat—
"O whae's this brings the fray to me?"

"It's I, Jamie Telfer of the fair Dodhead,
A harried man I think I be!
The captain of Bewcastle has driven my gear;
For God's sake rise, and succour me!"

"Alas for wae!" quo' William's Wat,
"Alack, for thee my heart is sair!
I never cam by the fair Dodhead,
That ever I fand thy basket bare."

He's set his twa sons on coal-black steeds,
Himsel' upon a freckled gray,
And they are on wi' Jamie Telfer,
To Branksome Ha' to take the fray.

And whan they cam to Branksome Ha',
They shouted a' baith loud and hie,
Till up and spak him bauld Buccleuch,
Said—"Whae's this brings the fray to me?"

"It's I, Jamie Telfer o' the fair Dodhead,
And a harried man I think I be!
There's nought left in the fair Dodhead,
But a greeting wife and bairnies three."

"Alack for wae!" quoth the gude auld lord,
"And ever my heart is wae for thee!
But fye, gar cry on Willie, my son,
And see that he come to me speedilie!

"Gar warn the water, braid and wide,
Gar warn it soon and hastily!
They that winna ride for Telfer's kye,
Let them never look in the face o' me!

"Warn Wat o' Harden, and his sons,
Wi' them will Borthwick water ride;
Warn Gaudilands, and Allanhaugh,
And Gilmanscleugh, and Commonside.

"Ride by the gate at Priesthaughswire,
And warn the Currors o' the Lee;
As ye come down the Hermitage Slack,
Warn doughty Willie o' Gorrinberry."

The Scots they rade, the Scots they ran,
Sae starkly and sae steadilie!
And aye the ower-word o' the thrang,
Was—"Rise for Branksome readilie!"

The gear was driven the Frostylee up,
Frae the Frostylee unto the plain,
Whan Willie has looked his men before,
And saw the kye right fast driving.

"Whae drives thir kye?" 'gan Willie say,
"To mak an outspeckle o' me?"
"It's I, the captain o' Bewcastle, Willie;
I'winna layne my name for thee."

"O will ye let Telfer's kye gae back,
Or will ye do aught for regard o' me?
Or, by the faith of my body," quo' Willie Scott,
"I'se ware my dame's calf-skin on thee!"

"I winna let the kye gae back,
Neither for thy love, nor yet thy fear;
But I will drive Jamie Telfer's kye,
In spite of every Scot that's here."

"Set on them, lads!" quo' Willie than;
"Fye, lads, set on them cruellie!
For ere they win to the Ritterford,
Mony a toom saddle there shall be!"

Then till't they gaed, wi' heart and hand;
The blows fell thick as bickering hail;
And mony a horse ran masterless,
And mony a comely cheek was pale!

But Willie was stricken ower the head,
And thro' the knapscap the sword has gane;
And Harden grat for very rage,
Whan Willie on the ground lay slain.

But he's ta'en aff his gude steel-cap,
And thrice he's waved it in the air—
The Dinlay snaw was ne'er mair white,
Nor the lyart locks o' Harden's hair.

"Revenge! revenge!" auld Wat 'gan cry;
"Fye, lads, lay on them cruellie!
We'll ne'er see Tiviotside again,
Or Willie's death revenged shall be."

O mony a horse ran masterless,
The splintered lances flew on hie;
But or they wan to the Kershope ford,
The Scots had gotten the victory.

John o' Brigham there was slain,
And John o' Barlow, as I hear say;
And thirty mae o' the captain's men,
Lay bleeding on the ground that day.

The captain was run thro' the thick of the thigh—
O weel may his lady for him make maen!
If he had lived this hundred year,
He had never been loved by woman again.

"Hae back thy kye!" the captain said;
"Dear kye, I trow, to some they be!
For gin I should live a hundred years,
There will ne'er fair lady smile on me."

Then word is gane to the captain's bride,
Even in the bower where that she lay,
That her lord was prisoner in enemy's land,
Since to Tividale he had led the way.

"I'd sooner hae sewed a winding-sheet,
And helped to put it ower his head,
Than hae seen him maimed, as nae man should be,
Whan he ower Liddel his men did lead!"

There was a wild gallant among us a',
His name was Watty wi' the Wudspurs,*
Cried—"On for his house in Stanegirthside,
If ony man will ride with us!"

When they cam to the Stanegirthside,
They dang wi' trees, and burst the door;
They loosed out a' the captain's kye,
And set them forth our lads before.

There was an auld wife ayont the fire,
A wee bit o' the captain's kin—

* Hotspur, or Madspur.

"Whae daur loose out the captain's kye,
Or answer to him and his men?"

"It's I, Watty Wudspurs: loose the kye!
I winna layne my name frae thee!
And I will loose out the captain's kye,
In scorn of a' his men and he."

When they cam to the fair Dodhead,
They were a welcome sight to see!
For instead of his ain ten milk-kye,
Jamie Telfer has gotten thirty and three.

And he has paid the rescue shot,
Baith wi' goud, and white monie;
And at the burial o' Willie Scott,
I wot was mony a weeping e'e.

MAY COLLEAN.

A VERSION of this ballad, under the title of "The Outlandish Knight," is, I believe, very common in England, but I am inclined to think that it is of Scottish origin. Indeed, tradition, which in such matters has a potential voice, points to a locality on the coast of Carrick as the scene of some such event as is described in the ballad; and the name, Collean, is evidently a corruption of Colzean, a seat of the Kennedys.

I observe that Mr Bell, in his recent publication entitled *Early Ballads*, states that another ballad called "The Water o' Wearie's Well," is the Scottish rendering of "The Outlandish Knight." He has been led into this error by reposing too much confidence in the authority of Mr Dixon, whose knowledge of Scottish Minstrelsy seems to have been mainly derived from a perusal of the late Mr P. Buchan's Manuscripts. Mr Buchan printed, in his collection of 1828, a ballad bearing that name, but it is not authentic, being made up of stanzas borrowed from versions of "Burd Helen."

The version given by Mr Chambers is somewhat longer than the following one, and is very good. But I have contented myself with collating the copies given by Herd and Motherwell.

FAUSE Sir John a-wooing came,
To a maid of beauty rare;
May Collean was this lady's name,
Her father's only heir.

He's courted her but, and he's courted her ben,
And courted her into the ha',
Until he got the maid's consent,
To mount and ride awa'.

He went down to her father's stable,
Where all the steeds did stand;
And he has taken the best steed,
That was in her father's land.

He's got on, and she's gone on,
And fast as they could flee,
Until they cam' to a lonesome part,
A rock abune the sea.

"Light down, light down now," says fause Sir John,
"Your bridal bed you see;
Here have I drowned seven ladies fair,
The eighth ane you shall be.

"Cast off, cast off your jewels fine,
Cast off your silken gown,
They are ower fine and ower costly
To rot in the salt sea foam."

"O turn ye then about, Sir John,
And look to the leaf o' the tree,
For it never became a gentleman,
A naked woman to see!"

He turned himself straight round about,
To look to the leaf o' the tree;
She has twined her arms around his waist,
And thrown him into the sea.

"Now lie thou there, thou fause Sir John,
Where ye thought to lay me;
Although ye hae stripp'd me to the skin,
Your cla'es ye hae gotten wi' thee!"

"O help, O help now, May Collean!
O help, or else I drown!
I'll tak' ye hame to your father's gates,
And safely set ye down."

"Nae help, nae help, thou fause Sir John,
Nae help nor pity to thee!
Ye lie not in a caulder bed
Than the ane ye meant for me!"

So she went on her father's steed,
As fast as she could gae;
And she cam' hame to her father's house,
Before it was break of day.

Up then spake the wily parrot,
"Whaur were ye, May Collean?
And what hae ye done wi' the fause Sir John,
That rade wi' you yestreen?"

"O hold your tongue, my pretty parrot,
Lay not the blame on me;
Your cage shall be of the beaten gold,
And the spokes of ivorie."

Up then spak' her father dear,
From the chamber where he lay;
"What is it ails the pretty parrot,
That it prattles sae lang or day?"

"There cam' a cat to my cage door,
I thought would have worried me;
And I was calling on May Collean
To take the cat from me."

ANNAN WATER.

THIS ballad was first published in the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border," and is here given without any alteration. I have not been able to discover any other extant version.

"ANNAN water's deep to wade,
And my love Annie's wondrous bonnie;
Laith am I she should wet her feet,
Because I love her best of ony.

"Gar saddle me the bonny black,
Gar saddle sune, and mak' him ready;
For I will down the Gatehope-slack,
And all to see my bonnie lady."

He has loupen on the bonny black,
And stirred him wi' the spur right sairly;
But, or he wan the Gatehope-slack,
I trow his steed was wae and weary.

He has loupen on the bonny gray,
He rade the right gate and the ready;
I trow he would nejther stent nor stay,
For he was seeking his bonnie lady.

O he has ridden ower field and fell,
Through muir, and moss, and mony a mire;

His spurs o' steel were sair to bide,
And frae her fore-feet flew the fire.

"My bonny gray, now play your part;
Gin ye be the steed that wins my dearie,
Wi' corn and hay ye'se aye be fed,
And never spur shall make you weary!"

The gray was a mare, and a right good mare,
But when she wan the Annan water,
She couldna hae ridden a furlong mair,
Had a thousand merks been wadded at her.

"O boatman, boatman, put aff your boat—
Put aff your boat for gowden monie!
I cross the drumly stream to-night,
Or never mair I see my Annie!"

"O I was sworn sae late yestreen,
And not by ae aith, but by many;
And for a' the gowd in fair Scotland,
I daurna tak' ye through to Annie."

The side was stey, and the bottom deep,
Frae bank to brae the water pouring;
And the bonny gray mare did sweat for fear,
For she heard the water-kelpie roaring.

O he has pu'd aff his dapperpy coat,
The silver buttons glancèd bonny;
The waistcoat bursted aff his breast,
He was sae full o' melancholy.

He has ta'en the ford at that stream-tail;
I wot he swam baith strong and steady;

But the stream was broad, and his strength did fail,
And he never saw his bonnie lady.

"O wae betide the frush saugh-wand,
And wae betide the bush of brier!
It brak' into my true-love's hand,
When his strength did fail, and his limbs did tire.

"And wae betide ye, Annan water,
This night that ye are a drumly river!
For over thee I'll build a bridge,
That ye nae mair true love may sever."

HUGH OF LINCOLN.

THERE are several versions of this very beautiful ballad. That given in Percy's "Reliques" under the name of "The Jew's Daughter" is somewhat deficient in the commencement, but the want has been supplied from another copy in Herd's collection. Messrs Jamieson and Motherwell have also preserved copies from recitation, which severally are of great merit.

The historical basis of the ballad, being the murder of a Christian child by the Jews of Lincoln, in the reign of Henry III., is well known, if not to the students of history, at least to the lovers of poetry; for it furnished Geoffrey Chaucer with the subject of his "Prioresse's Tale," perhaps the most pathetic of his many noble poems.

A' THE boys of merry Lincoln,
Were playing at the ba';
And wi' them was the sweet Sir Hugh,
The flower amang them a'.

He kepped the ba' then wi' his foot,
And catch'd it wi' his knee,
And even in at the Jew's window,
Wi' speed he gar'd it flee.

Out then cam' the Jew's daughter—
"Will ye come in and dine?"
"I winna come in, and I canna come in
Till I get that ba' of mine.

"Cast out the ba' to me, fair maid,
Cast out the ba' to me!"
"Ye ne'er shall hae't, my bonnie Sir Hugh,
Till ye come up to me."

And she has gane to her father's garden,
As fast as she could rin,
And pu'd an apple, red and white,
To wile the young thing in.

Then she has ta'en out a little penknife,
Hung low down by her gair;
She has twined the young thing o' his life,
A word he never spak' mair.

And out and cam' the thick, thick blude,
And out and cam' the thin,
And out and cam' the bonnie heart's blude,
There was nae life left in.

She laid him on a dressing-board,
And dress'd him like a swine,
Says,—"Gae ye now, Sir Hugh, and play
Wi' your sweet play-feres nine!"

She row'd him in a cake of lead;
Says,—"Lie ye there and sleep!"
She cast him into the deep draw-well,
Was fifty fathom deep.

When bells were rung, and mass was sung,
And ilka lady gaed hame,
Then ilka lady had her young son,
But Lady Helen had nane.

She row'd her mantle her about,
And sair, sair 'gan she weep,
And she ran into the Jew's castel,
When they were all asleep.

"My bonnie Sir Hugh, my pretty Sir Hugh!
I pray thee to me speak."
"O lady, gae to the deep draw-well,
Gin ye your son would seek."

Lady Helen ran to the deep draw-well,
And knelt upon her knee:
"My bonnie Sir Hugh, an ye be here,
I pray thee speak to me!"

"The lead it is wondrous heavy, mother,
The well is wondrous deep;
A keen pen-knife sticks in my heart,
A word I downa speak.

"But lift me out o' this deep draw-well,
Put a bible at my feet,
And bury me in yon churchyard,
And I'll lie still and sleep.

"Gae hame, gae hame, my mother dear,
Fetch me my winding sheet;
For never in merry Lincoln town
Again shall we twa meet."

FINE FLOWERS I' THE VALLEY.

THIS is perhaps the most popular of all the Scottish ballads, being commonly recited and sung even at the present day. Sometimes a different refrain is employed, as in the copy given by Mr Jamieson, under the name of "The Cruel Brother," which commences thus—

"There was three ladies play'd at the ba',
With a heigh-ho ! and a lily gay;
There cam' a knight and play'd o'er them a',
As the primrose spreads so sweetly."

It appears that a version of the same ballad is popular in some parts of England, where it is known as "The Three Knights." In it also the refrain differs; the first stanza, according to Mr Bell, running as follows :—

"There did three knights come from the west;
With the high and the lily, O;
And these three knights courted one ladye,
As the rose was so sweetly blown."

The ballad was first printed in Herd's collection, though in rather an imperfect form. The subjoined version is taken down from recitation.

THERE were three sisters in a ha',
Fine flowers i' the valley;
There came three lords amang them a',
The red, green, and the yellow.

The first o' them was clad in red,
Fine flowers i' the valley;
"O lady, will ye be my bride?"
Wi' the red, green, and the yellow.

The second o' them was clad in green,
Fine flowers i' the valley;
"O lady, will ye be my queen?"
Wi' the red, green, and the yellow.

The third o' them was clad in yellow,
Fine flowers i' the valley;
"O lady, will you be my marrow?"
Wi' the red, green, and the yellow.

"O ye maun ask my father dear,"
Fine flowers i' the valley;
"Likewise the mother that did me bear;"
Wi' the red, green, and the yellow.

"And ye maun ask my sister Ann,"
Fine flowers i' the valley;
"And not forget my brother John;"
Wi' the red, green, and the yellow.

"O I have ask'd thy father dear,"
Fine flowers i' the valley;
"Likewise the mother that did thee bear;"
Wi' the red, green, and the yellow.

"And I have ask'd your sister Ann,"
Fine flowers i' the valley;
"But I forgot your brother John;"
Wi' the red, green, and the yellow.

Now when the wedding day was come,
Fine flowers i' the valley;
The knight would take his bonny bride home,
Wi' the red, green, and the yellow.

And mony a lord, and mony a knight,
Fine flowers i' the valley;
Cam' to behold that lady bright,
Wi' the red, green, and the yellow.

There was nae man that did her see,
Fine flowers i' the valley;
But wished himsell bridegroom to be,
Wi' the red, green, and the yellow

Her father led her down the stair,
Fine flowers i' the valley;
And her sisters twain they kiss'd her there;
Wi' the red, green, and the yellow.

Her mother led her through the close,
Fine flowers i' the valley;
Her brother John set her on her horse;
Wi' the red, green, and the yellow.

"You are high and I am low,"
Fine flowers i' the valley;
"Give me a kiss before you go,"
Wi' the red, green, and the yellow.

She was louting down to kiss him sweet,
Fine flowers i' the valley;
When wi' his knife he wounded her deep,
Wi' the red, green, and the yellow.

She hadna ridden through half the town,
Fine flowers i' the valley ;
Until her heart's blood stained her gown,
Wi' the red, green, and the yellow.

"Ride saftly on," said the best young man,
Fine flowers i' the valley :
"I think our bride looks pale and wan!"
Wi' the red, green, and the yellow.

"O lead me over into yon stile,"
Fine flowers i' the valley ;
"That I may stop and breathe awhile,"
Wi' the red, green, and the yellow.

"O lead me over into yon stair,"
Fine flowers i' the valley ;
"For there I'll lie and bleed nae mair,
Wi' the red, green, and the yellow.

"O what will you leave to your father dear?"
Fine flowers i' the valley ;
"The siller-shod steed that brought me here,"
Wi' the red, green, and the yellow.

"What will you leave to your mother dear?
Fine flowers i' the valley ;
"My velvet pall and my pearlin' gear,"
Wi' the red, green, and the yellow.

"What will you leave to your sister Ann?"
Fine flowers i' the valley ;
"My silken gown that stands its lane,"
Wi' the red, green, and the yellow.

"What will you leave to your sister Grace?"
Fine flowers i' the valley;
"My bluidy shirt to wash and dress,"
Wi' the red, green, and the yellow.

"And what will ye leave to your brother John?"
Fine flowers i' the valley;
"The gates o' hell to let him in,"
Wi' the red, green, and the yellow.

THE GARDENER.

This ballad exists only in an imperfect shape, and I suspect has been altered for the worse by the reciters; nevertheless it is one of considerable beauty. The following stanzas, recovered and quoted by Herd in his collection, may possibly have belonged to it:—

"False love! and hae ye play'd me this
In summer, 'mid the flowers?
I shall repay thee back again
In winter, 'mid the showers.

But again, dear love, and again, dear love,
Will ye not turn again?
As ye look to other women,
Shall I to other men!"

These verses, with slight alteration, were inserted by Sir Walter Scott in "Waverley." The more extended versions were published by Messrs Kinloch and Buchan. As the materials are so imperfect, I have allowed myself, in this instance, a little license in the selection of the names of flowers, for I cannot believe that any minstrel would have specified kail-blades or salads, which nevertheless appear in Mr Kinloch's copy.

THE gardener stands in his bower door,
Wi' a primrose in his hand;
And by there cam' a leal maiden,
As jimp as a willow-wand.

"O lady, can ye fancy me,
And will ye be my bride?
Ye'se get a' the flowers in my garden,
To be to you a weed.

"The lily white shall be your smock,
It suits your body best;
A garland o' the gillyflower,
And the red rose in your breast.

"Your gown shall be the sweet-william,
Your coat the camovine,
Your apron o' the ribbon-grass,
That grows sae tall and fine.

"Your shoon shall be o' the rosemarie,
Your garters o' woodbine,
Your stockings o' the herb o' grace,
Come smile, sweetheart o' mine!

"Your gloves shall be the marygold,
All glittering to your hand,
Weel spotted wi' the blue blaewort,
That grows amang corn-land."

"Young man, and hae ye shap'd me this,
Amang the summer flowers!
Now I will shape a weed for you
Amang the winter showers.

"The new-fa'en snaw to be your shirt,
It suits your body best;
Your head shall be wrapt wi' the eastern wind,
And the cauld rain on your breast."

BURD HELEN.

THIS is essentially the same ballad with that given in Percy's "Reliques," under the title of "Child Waters." I am bound to admit that, in some respects, the English version is superior to any that has been recovered from tradition in Scotland, or to any collation which has yet appeared. Messrs Jamieson, Kinloch, and Buchan have severally presented us with versions, which differ materially from each other; and Mr Chambers, who first attempted the work of compilation, acknowledges the great difficulty which he experienced in dealing with such discrepant materials. I venture to think that he would have succeeded better, had he, on the one hand, rejected some verses which are superfluous, and, on the other, abstained from interpolating any portion of the English ballad. I offer my own compiled version with much diffidence; merely premising that every line of it is contained in one or other of the copies mentioned above, or in Mr Kinloch's MSS., of which he has allowed me the use.

LORD John stood in his stable door,
Said he was boune to ride:
Burd Helen stood in her bower door,
Said she'd run by his side.

"The corn is turning ripe, Lord John;
The nuts are growing fu':
And ye are boune for your ain countrie;
Fain wad I gae wi' you."

"O better ye'd stay at hame, Helen,
And sew your silken seam;
For my house is in the far Hielands,
And ye'll hae puir welcome hame."

"I winna stay, Lord John," she said,
"To sew my silken seam;
Though your house is in the far Hielands,
And I'll hae puir welcome hame."

He has mounted on his milk-white steed,
And fast away rode he,
She's clad hersel' in page attire,
And after him ran she.

And he was ne'er sae frank a knight,
As ance wad bid her ride;
And she was ne'er sae mean a May,
As ance wad bid him bide.

Lord John he rade, Burd Helen ran,
A live-lang simmer tide,
Until they cam to a wan water,
And folks do call it Clyde.

"Seest thou yon water, Helen," said he,
"That flows from bank to brim?"
"I trust to God, Lord John," she said,
"You ne'er will see me swim!"

But he was ne'er sae frank a knight,
As ance wad bid her ride;
Nor did he sae much as reach his hand,
To help her ower the tide.

The first step that she steppit in,
She steppit to the knee;
Says, "Wae be to ye, waefu' water,
For through ye I maun be."

The next step that she steppit in,
She steppit to the neck;
And the bairn that lay beneath her heart,
For cauld began to quake.

"Lie still, lie still, my ain dear babe,
Ye work your mother wae;
Your father rides on high horseback,
Cares little for us twae."

About the middle o' Clyde water,
There was a yird-fast stane;
There he lean'd him o'er his saddle-bow,
And took her up behin'.

"Oh, tell me this, now, good Lord John;
In pity tell to me;
How far is it to your lodging,
Where we this night maun be?"

"O dinna ye see yon castle, Helen,
Stands on yon sunny lea?
There is a lady in yon castell,
Will sinder you and me."

"Is there a lady in yon castell,
Will sinder you and I?
Betide me weel, betide me wae,
I shall gang there and try."

O four and twenty gay ladyes
Welcom'd Lord John to the ha',
But a bonnier far than ony there,
Led his horse to the stable sta'.

Mony a lord and gay ladye
Sate dining in the ha',
But the bonniest face was ever seen,
Was waiting on them a'.

Then up and spake Lord John's sister;
A sweet young maid was she:
"My brother has brought the bonniest page,
That ever I did see;
But the red flits fast frae his cheek,
And the tear stands in his e'e."

Then out and spake Lord John's mother;
She spake wi' meikle scorn;
"He's liker a woman great wi' bairn,
Than ony serving man!"

"O it maks me laugh, my mother dear,
Sic words to hear frae thee.
He is a squire's ae dearest son,
That for love has followed me.

"Rise up, rise up, my bonnie boy;
Gie my horse the corn and hay."
"O that I will, my master dear,
As quickly as I may."

She took the hay aneath her arm,
The corn intill her hand;

But atween the stable-door and the sta',
Burd Helen made a stand.

"O room ye round, my bonnie broun steids;
O room ye near the wa';
For the pain that strikes through my twa sides,
I fear, will gar me fa'."

She leaned her back again the wa';
Strong travail came her on;
And e'en amang the horses' feet,
Burd Helen bare a son.

Lord John's mother intill her bower
Was sitting all alane,
When in the silence o' the night
She heard Burd Helen's maen.

"Win up, win up, my son," she says;
"Gae see how a' does fare,
For I think I hear a woman's groans,
And a bairnie greeting sair!"

Lord John is to the stable gane,
As fast as he could hie;
"O open, O open, Burd Helen," he says,
"Ye'll open the door to me!"

"How can I open, how shall I open,
How can I open to thee?
I'm lying amang your horses' feet,
Your young son on my knee."

He hit the door then wi' his foot,
Sae did he wi' his knee;

Till planks o' deal and locks o' airn,
In flinders gar'd he flee.

"An askin', an askin', Lord John," she says,
"An askin' ye'll grant me:
The warsten bed in a' your towers
For thy young son and me!"

"O yes, O yes, Burd Helen," he said,
"A' that and mair frae me;
The very best bower in a' my towers
For my young son and thee."

"An askin', an askin', Lord John," she says,
"An askin' ye'll grant me,
The meanest woman in a' the house
To wait on him and me."

"The highest lady in a' my bowers
Shall wait on him and thee,
And that's my sister, Isabel,
And a sweet young maid is she.

"O ye will tak' up my little young son,
And wash him wi' the milk,
And ye'll tak' up my ain lady,
And row her in the silk.

"And cheer ye up, Burd Helen," he says,
"Look nae mair sad or wae,
For your wedding and your kirking too,
Shall baith be in ae day."

THE BATTLE OF CORRICHIE.

THIS rude ballad, composed in the dialect of Aberdeen, and said to have been written by one John Forbes, schoolmaster at Mary Culter, upon Deeside, commemorates an unfortunate battle which took place in 1562, during the reign of Queen Mary, between the royal troops and the dependants of the great northern Earl of Huntley. It would require more space than I can afford, to give an account of the circumstances which led to this disastrous encounter, and which compelled a loyal nobleman to appear in the odious character of a rebel. Queen Mary had then just returned from France, and was under the tutelage of her illegitimate brother, Murray, who, according to my understanding of the annals of those times, infamously abused his trust, for the purpose of destroying a powerful rival. The following extract, giving an account of the battle, is from Maitland's History :—

"Huntley, thus perceiving that all hopes of reconciling himself to her Majesty were lost (his enemy, too, the Earl of Mar, being created Earl of Murray), assembled all his friends, and approached Aberdeen, trusting to the affection of the citizens of that place, and the secret intelligence of the Queen's affairs, sent him by the Earl of Sutherland and Lesly of Buquhane, who attended the court. But being informed that their correspondence was discovered, and that Lesly was taken, he began to retreat; till, hearing the Earl of Murray was at his heels, he determined to fight; and for

that purpose retired into the forest of Corrichy, a place almost wholly surrounded by a marsh. It was not long before Murray came in view and joined battle; but many of his foot giving way, he had certainly been defeated, had not his cavalry, where fought the Earl of Morton and Lord Lindsay, not only sustained the shock of the pursuing Huntleans, but with their lances, which the others had unwarily abandoned, drove them back to the forest. This, Murray's fugitives perceiving, returned, and slaughtered the flying Gordons.

"In this conflict the Earl himself was taken prisoner, with his two sons, John and Adam. Buchanan says that the father, being corpulent, was smothered in the crowd; but the author of the 'Innocence of Mary' writes, that he was murdered by the express orders of Murray. In whatever manner, however, Huntley was killed, certain it is that John was publicly beheaded three days after at Aberdeen, when his winning aspect and valourous deportment on the scaffold drew tears from the spectators. Adam was spared on account of his youth."

MOURN ye heighlands, and mourn ye leighlands,
I trow ye hae meikle need;
For the bonnie burn o' Corrichie,
Has run this day wi' bleid.

The hopefu' Laird o' Finlater,
Erle Huntley's gallant son,
For the love he bare our beauteous queene,
Has gar'd fair Scotland moan.

He has broken his ward in Aberdeen,
Thro' dreid o' the fause Murray,
And has gather'd the gentle Gordon clan
And his father, auld Huntley.

Fain wad he tak' our bonny gude queene,
And bear her awa wi' him;
But Murray's slee wiles spoilt a' the sport,
And reft him o' life and limb.

Murray gar'd raise the tardy Merns men,
An' Angus, and mony mair;
Erle Morton, and the Byres Lord Lindsay;
And campit at the Hill o' Fair.

Erle Huntley cam' wi' Haddo Gordon,
An' countit ane thousan' men;
But Murray had abune twal hunder,
Wi' sax score horsemen and ten.

They sounded the bugles an' the trumpets,
And march'd on in brave array;
Till the spears and the axes forgather'd,
An' then did begin the fray.

The Gordons sae fiercelie did fecht it,
Withouten terror or dreid;
That mony o' Murray's men lay gaspin',
And dyed the grund wi' their bleid.

Then fause Murray feignit to flee them,
An' they pursued at his back,
When the half o' the Gordons deserted,
An' turned wi' Murray in a crack.

Wi' heather in their bonnets they turn'd,
The traitor Haddo at their head,
An' slay'd their brothers and their fathers,
An' spoil'd, and left them deid.

Then Murray cried to tak' the auld Gordon,
An' mony ane ran wi' speid;

But Stuart o' Inchbraik had him sticket,
An' out gush'd the fat lurdane's bleid.

Then they took his twa sons, quick and haill,
An' bare them awa' to Aberdeen;
But sair did our gude queene lament
The waefu' chance that they were ta'en.

Erle Murray lost mony a gallant stout man,
The hopefu' laird o' Thornitoune,
Pittera's sons, and Egli's far-fear'd laird,
An' mair to me unkenn'd, fell doun.

Erle Huntley miss'd ten score o' his braw men,
Some o' heigh, and some o' leigh degree;
Skene's youngest son, the pride o' a' the clan,
Was there found deid, he wadna flee.

This bluidy fecht was fiercely foucht,
October's aught-and-twenty day,
Christ's fifteen hunder, threescore year,
And twa, will mark the deidlie fray.

But now the day maist waefu' cam',
That day the queene did greet her fill;
For Huntley's gallant stalwart son,
Was headed on the headin' hill.

Five noble Gordons wi' him hangit were,
Upon the samen fatal plaine;
Cruel Murray gar'd the waefu' queene look out,
And see her lover and lieges slaine.

I wish our queene had better friends,
I wish our countrie better peace;
I wish our lords wad na discord,
I wish our wars at hame may cease!

THE BONNIE EARL OF MURRAY.

THE murder of James Stewart, Earl of Murray, in the year 1592, excited the utmost indignation throughout Scotland. This young nobleman, who is universally described as a person of great accomplishment, was not a descendant of the too celebrated Regent, but had espoused his eldest daughter and heiress, attaining thus his vast possessions, but also becoming answerable to his enemies. Of these, the most powerful and determined was the Earl of Huntley, grandson of the nobleman who was slain at the Battle of Corrichie, an event which for a time prostrated the power of the Gordons, and which was believed to have been forced on by the nefarious machinations of the Regent. As feudal quarrels in Scotland were then prosecuted with all the tenacity of the Corsican *vendetta*, the Earl of Huntley, who was in high favour with James VI., then recently married, took advantage of a traitorous attempt of Francis Stewart, to accuse the Earl of Murray of participation; and, having obtained a royal warrant, beset him in his house of Dunicbristle in Fife, and summoned him to surrender. This Murray refused to do, and an obstinate combat commenced; until, the house having been set on fire, the unfortunate inmates were forced to sally forth, when some of them, including the Sheriff of Murray, were slain. The young Earl broke through his assailants and gained the sea-shore; but part of his dress being on fire, he was traced, through the darkness, to a cave, where he was inhumanly murdered. The first blow was given by Gordon of Buckie, who, observing that Huntley held back, compelled

him to advance and stab his adversary, in order that he might be as deep in the business as the rest. Huntley, thus adjured, struck the wounded man on the face with his dagger, who, with that mixture of vanity and valour which was exhibited in later times by Joachim Murat, upbraided him with having spoiled a better face than his own.

Murray was much beloved by the commons, and this foul murder seemed for a time likely to result in insurrection. But such events were in those days too common to create a lasting impression. Huntley was put into ward, but, having pleaded the royal commission and authority, was discharged after a brief imprisonment. The people, always ready to refer bad actions to some secret motive on the part of their rulers, alleged that King James had been privy to the death of Murray, and that the real cause was jealousy of the favour with which the latter was regarded by the Queen. There seems to be no foundation whatever for any such idea; nevertheless it was very general, and is openly expressed in the following ballad.

There is extant another ballad on the same subject, but of inferior merit, which I shall here insert:—

"Open the gates, and let him come in;
He is my brother Huntley, he'll do him nae harm."

The gates they were open'd, they let him come in,
But fause traitor Huntley, he did him great harm.

He's ben, and ben, and ben to his bed,
And wi' a sharp rapier he stabbed him dead.

The lady cam' down the stair wringing her hands,
"He has slain Lord Murray, the flower o' Scotland!"

But Huntley lap on his horse, rade to the King;
"Ye're welcome hame, Huntley; and whaur hae ye been?"

"Whaur hae ye been, and how hae ye sped?"
"I've killed the Earl o' Murray dead in his bed."

"Foul fa' ye, Huntley! and why did ye so?
Ye might hae ta'en Murray, and saved his life too."

"Her bread it's to bake, her yill is to brew;
My sister's a widow, and sair do I rue.

"Her corn grows ripe, her meadows grow green,
But in bonny Dunibristle I daurna be seen."

The author of this effusion seems to have imagined that Murray had espoused a sister of Huntley. The ballad printed below is to be found in almost every collection.

YE Highlands and ye Lawlands,
Oh whare hae ye been?
They hae slain the Earl o' Murray,
And lain him on the green.

"Now wae be to you, Huntley!
And wherefore did ye sae?
I bade you bring him wi' you,
But forbade you him to slay."

He was a braw gallant,
And he rade at the ring;
And the bonnie Earl o' Murray,
Oh! he might have been a king!

He was a braw gallant,
And he rade at the glove,
And the bonnie Earl o' Murray,
Oh! he was the Queen's love!

O lang, lang may his lady
Look frae the Castle Doune,
Ere she see the Earl o' Murray
Come sounding through the toun.

THE BATTLE OF BALRINNES.

THE battle of Balrinnes, or Glenlivat, as it is more commonly called, was fought in the year 1594, between the Earl of Argyle, as Lieutenant of James VI., and the Earls of Huntley and Erroll, who were at that time accused of conniving at a plot, the object of which was to introduce Spanish troops into Scotland with the object of restoring the Roman Catholic religion. Argyle was at the head of ten thousand men, of whom at least six thousand were well armed and tolerably disciplined, whereas the insurgent earls could scarcely muster more than fifteen hundred; but these were, for the most part, gentlemen well armed and mounted, led by experienced officers who had served in the wars abroad; and they had, moreover, the advantage of six pieces of ordnance. The first discharge struck a panic into the Highlanders, who were then quite ignorant of the terrible effect of artillery. On the second discharge many of them fled. Enough, however, stood their ground to maintain a desperate encounter; and it was not until many of the chief men on either side had been killed or wounded, that the victory was gained by the insurgents.

The ballad, narrating the battle, which it does with almost tedious minuteness, is very little known. A copy of it, I am given to understand, exists in the Pepysian collection. That which I have used was printed by the late Sir John Graham Dalzell, in a scarce volume entitled "Scottish Poems of the Sixteenth Century." Attached to, or accompanying it, is a very curious cotemporary narrative of the circumstances

which led to the battle, from the pen of a zealous Catholic. It is to be regretted that Sir J. G. Dalzell did not distinctly specify the source from which he obtained these interesting documents. He says in his Preface, that "above seven hundred volumes of manuscripts have been examined in search of poems and illustrations. Most of them are in the Advocates' Library; others in the Cotton and Harleian Libraries, public offices, and elsewhere." This is so vague a statement, that it gives no encouragement towards a search. But of the genuineness of the material, from whatever depositary it may have been derived, there can be no manner of doubt.

The ballad itself is very peculiar. I am inclined to think that it was recovered from an English collection; for the editor says, regarding its merits, which he rates rather low, "it is impossible to judge correctly, from such vitiated orthography, and the errors with which it abounds; both the consequence of being copied by some ignorant English transcriber." The version, as he printed it, certainly is full of blunders; but by due care these can be corrected without any straining of conjecture; and, in the subjoined copy, I have endeavoured to restore it in the Scottish dialect, without deviating from the text, except in the instance of three or four lines, from which no meaning could be extracted. One stanza I have been compelled to omit, as quite beyond my interpretation. But as I consider the ballad to be perfectly genuine, and composed immediately after the event which it celebrates, I regard it as one of high antiquarian value.

Fragments of it, however, must have been current; because in Mr Jamieson's "Popular Ballads and Songs," the introduction is printed under the title of "The Battle of Glenlivet." That cannot have been taken from Sir J. G. Dalzell's version, for the third stanza does not appear therein; otherwise they are nearly the same. I regard the introduction as an injury to the ballad; but I have no right, in a collection

of this kind, to withhold it; and, therefore, I now transcribe it from Mr Jamieson's collection.

Frae Dunnoter to Aberdeen,
I rase and took the way,
Believing well that it had been,
Not half an hour to day.
The lift was clad with cloudes gray,
And masked was the moon,
Which me deceived where I lay,
And made me rise so soon.

In Cow Mouth I met a man
Well graithed in his gear;
"What news?" quoth I; then he began
To tell a fite of weir;
Saying, "The ministers, I fear,
A bloody browst have brewn;
For yesterday withoutten mair,
On the hill at Stradown,

"I saw three lords in battle fight,
Right furiously awhile,
Huntlie and Erroll, as they hight,
Were both against Argyle.
Turn back with me, and ride a mile,
And I shall make it kend,
How they began the form and style,
And of the battle's end."

Then I, as any man would be,
Right curious was to know,
Mair of that tale he told to me,
The which, he said, he saw.
By then the day began to daw,
And back with him I rade;
Then he began the sooth to show,
And on this wise he said.

So ends Mr Jamieson; but so assuredly he would not have ended, had he known that more was extant. Three out of these four stanzas are given by Dalzell; and, what is remarkable, the dialect, in his Anglicised version, is more Scottish than that of Jamieson.

Whatever may be thought of the intrinsic merits of the ballad, it certainly ought to be included in a collection of national minstrelsy, on account of its historic value. It seems highly probable that it was composed by the same person, very likely a priest, who drew up the prose account of the battle, and who was an eyewitness.

MACCALLUM-MORE cam' frae the west,
Wi' mony a bow and brand;
To waste the Rhinnes he thought best,
The Earl o' Huntlie's land.
He swore that nane should him gainstand,
Except that he were fey,
But a' should be at his command,
That dwelt to north o' Tay.

Then Huntlie, to prevent that peril,
He sent right hastilie,
Unto the noble Earl of Errol,
Besought him for supplie.
"Sae lang's a man will stand by me,
Shall Huntlie hae support,
For gin he lose fair Strathbogie,
The Slaines* will come to hurt.

"O thinks Argyle to part us twain,
And reave us o' our right,

* Slaines Castle, the seat of the Earl of Errol.

That ane of us shall first be slain,
The other tak the flight?
Suppose that he be much of might,
By force of Hielandmen;
We's be a mot into his sight,
Or he pass hame again.

"Be blithe, my merry men, be blithe,
Argyle shall hae the warse,
Gif he into this country kythe,*
I hope in God his cross!"
Then lap that lord upon his horse,
Led out his men frae Turray,†
To meet wi' Huntlie and his force,
At Elgin in the Murray.

On that same night thae twa lords met,
I wot it wasna' lang;
To tell you all, I have forgat
The mirth was them amang.
Then pipers played, and minstrels sang,
To glad the merry host;
Wha feared not the foemen strang,
Nor yet Argyle his boast.

They for twa days wad not remove,
But blithely drank the wine;
Some to his lass, some to his love,
Some to his lady fine.
And he that thought not for to blyne,‡
His mistress' token tak's,
They kisst it first, and set it syne
Upon their helms and jacks.

* Come. † Turreff in Buchan. ‡ Stop.

They pass'd the time right wantonlie,
Till word cam' at the last,
How that Argyle and his armie,
Were coming wondrous fast.
Then frae the toun the Barons past,
And Huntlie to them said,
"Gude gentlemen, we will us cast
In Strathbogie, but beed." *

When they into Strathbogie cam'
To that castell, but beed;
Then kenning not how things might fraine,†
For they had meikle need,
They woned them unto the dead,‡
As kirkmen could devise,
Syne pray'd to God that they might speed
Of their gude enterprise.

Then every man himsel' did arm,
To meet MacCallum More,
Unto Strathdoun who did great harm,
The Wodensday before.
As lions do puir lambs devour,
Wi' bludie teeth and nails,
They brent the biggings, took the store,
Syne slew the people's sells.

Beside all this hie crueltie,
He said, ere he wad cease,
The standing-stanes o' Strathbogie
Should be his pallion's place.

* Without delay. † Happen.
‡ Prepared themselves for death.

But Huntlie said: "With God his grace,
We first sall fight them ance,
Perchance that they may tak' the chase,
Ere they come to the stanes!"

Thir Lords kept on at afternoon
Wi' a' their weirmen wight,
Then sped up to the Cabrach soon,
Whair they byde a' that night.
Upon the morn, when day was light,
They raise and made them boune,
Intil ane castle on a height;
They call it Auchindoun.

Beside that castle, on a croft,
They stended pallions there;
Then spak' a man that had been oft
In jeopardie of weir;
"My Lords, your foes they are to fear,
Though we were never sae stout,
Therefore command some men of weir
To watch the rest about."

By this was done, some gentlemen,
Of noble kin and blude,
To council wi' thir Lords began,
Of matters to conclude:
For weel eneugh they understood
The matter was of weight,
They had sae monie men of gude,
In battle for to fight.

The first man in council spak',
Gude Errol, it was he:

He says, "I will the vanguard tak',
And leading upon me.
My Lord Huntlie, come succour me,
When ye see me opprest;
For frae the field I will not flee,
Sae lang as I may last."

Thereat some Gordons waxed wraithe,
And said he did them wrang:
To let this lord then were they laith,
First to the battle gang.
The meeting that was them amang,
Was nae man that it heard;
But Huntlie, wi' a troop fu' strang,
Byde into the rear-guard.

This is the number of the force,
Thir Lords to battle led;
A thousand gentlemen on horse,
And some footmen they had;
Three hundred that shot arrows braid,
Four score that hagbuts bore;
This was the number that they had,
Of footmen with them fore.

And soon this worthy chivalrie,
All marching to the field,
Saw where Argyle and his armie,
Upon a hill had bield;
Abiding them wi' spear and shield,
Wi' bullets, darts, and bows;
Weel could the men their weapons wield,
To meet them was nae mowes.*

* No jesting matter.

When they sae near other were come,
That ilk man saw his fae—
"Gae to, assay the game!" said some;
But Captain Ker said, "Nay!
First let the guns before us gae,
That they may break the order."
Quoth baith the Lords, "Let it be sae,
Or ever we gae farder."

Then Andrew Gray, upon his horse,
Betwixt the battles rade,
Making the sign of haly cross,
"*In manus tuas*,"* he said.
He lighted doun the guns to lead,
Till they cam' to the rest;
Then Captain Ker unto him sped,
And bade him shoot in haste.

"That will I not," quoth Andrew Gray,
"Till they come owre yon hill;
Ower gude a cause hae we this day,
Thro' misguiding to spill;
Gae back, and bid our men bide still,
Till they come to the plain;
Then shall my shooting do them ill;
I will not shoot in vain."

"Shoot up, shoot up!" quoth Captain Ker,
"Shoot up to our comfort!"
The firsten shot it was too near,
It lighted all too short.

* I presume this is the reading intended. In Dalzell's copy the line is printed thus, "In mannis tuas he said."

The nexten shot their foes it hurt,
It lighted wondrous weel:
Quoth Andrew Gray, "I spy a sport,
For they begin to reel!

"Gae to, gude mates, and 'say the game,
Yon folks are in a fray;
Let see how we can mell wi' them,
Into their disarray;
Gae, gae, it is na time to stay,
All for my benison;
Save nane this day, that ye can slay,
Till we the field hae won!"

Then Errol hasted to the height
Whair he did battle bide,
Wi' him went Auchindoun and Gight,
And Bonnitoun by his side;
And mony mair did wi' him bide,
Wha's praise should not be smoor'd;*
But Captain Ker, that was their guide,
Rade aye before my Lord.

They were na mony men of weir,
But they were wonder true;
Wi' hagbuts, pistols, bow, and spear,
They did the foe pursue;
Whair bullets, darts, and arrows flew
As thick as hail or rain,
Whilk mony hurt; and some they slew
Of horse and gentlemen.

* Smothered, suppressed.

Huntlie made haste to succour him,
And charged furiouslie,
Whair sight of mony a man grew dim,
The shots sae thick did flie;
Whilk gar'd right mony a doughty die,
Of some on ilka side;
Argyle wi' his tauld* host did flee,
But MacLean did still abide.

MacLean had on a habergeon,
Ilk lord had on a jack,
Together fiercely are they run,
Wi' mony a gunnis crack.
The splinters o' the spears they brak
Flew up into the air,
And bore doun mony on their back,
Again raise never mair.

"Alace, I see a sorry sight!"
Said the Laird of MacLean;
"Thae feeble folks hae ta'en the flight,
And left me mine alane.
Now maun I flee or else be slain,
Since they will not return,"—
Wi' that he ran out owre a den,
Endlang a little burn.

Then, after great Argyle his host,
Some horsemen took the chase;
They turned their backs, for a' their boast
Contrair their faes to face.
They cried out O, and some, Alace,
But ne'er for mercy sought;

* Numbered.

Therefore the Gordons gave nae grace,
Because they crav'd it not.

Like harts, up howes and hills they ran,
Whair horsemen might not win :
"Retire again," quoth Huntlie then,
"To whair we did begin.
For here is mony a carved skin,
And mony a bludy beard,
For ony help, wi' little din,
Sall rot abune the eard."

When they cam' to the hill again,
They set doun on their knees ;
Syne thanked God that they had slain
Sae mony enemies.
They rose before Argyle his eyes,
Made Captain Ker a knight,
Syne stude amang the dead bodies,
Till they were out o' sight.

This deed sae doughtilie was done,
As I heard true men tell,
Upon a Thursday afternoon,
Sanct Francis' eve befell.
Gude Auchindoun was slain himsel',
Wi' seven mair in batell,
Sae was the laird of Lochenzell,*
Great pitie was to tell.

* Archibald and James Campbell of Lochnell, the nearest heirs of Argyle, were killed in this battle.

JOCK O' THE SIDE.

THIS Border ballad first appeared in the "Hawick Poetical Museum," 1784. It bears some resemblance to "Kinmont Willie," both in narrative and style; but is certainly more authentic, for it is well known that the traditionary copy of the other ballad was much improved by passing through the hands of Sir Walter Scott.

The reader is referred to the note prefixed to "Dick o' the Cow," for an explanation of the Border sir-names. Jock o' the Side was one of the marauding Armstrongs, nephew to the Laird of Mangerton; and seems to have attained a reputation even worse than that of his fellows. Sir Richard Maitland, in his poem against the Thieves of Liddesdale, honours him with special mention:—

"He is weel kend, Johne of the Syde,
A greater thief did never ryde;
He never tires,
For to break byres,
O'er muir and mires,
Ower gude ane guide."

He was rescued on this occasion by his two cousins, John and Walter Armstrong, sons of the Laird of Mangerton (who are respectively called the Laird's Jock and the Laird's Wat), and by one Hobbie or Halbert Noble, a fugitive English outlaw, whose fate is recorded in the ballad which bears his name, and which I place next in succession.

NOW Liddesdale has ridden a raid,
But I wat they had better hae staid at hame;
For Michael o' Winfield he is dead,
And Jock o' the Side is prisoner ta'en.

For Mangerton house Lady Downie has gane,
Her coats she has kilted up to her knee;
And down the water wi' speed she rins,
While tears in spaits * fa' fast frae her e'e.

Then up and spoke our gude auld laird—
"What news, what news, sister Downie, to me?"
"Bad news, bad news, for Michael is kill'd,
And they hae taken my son Johnie."

"Ne'er fear, sister Downie," quo' Mangerton,
"I have yokes of owsen, twenty and three;
My barns, my byres, and my faulds a' weel fill'd,
I'll part wi' them a' ere Johnie shall die.

"Three men I'll send to set him free,
A' harness'd wi' the best o' steel;
The English louns may hear, and drie
The weight o' their braid-swords to feel.

"The Laird's Jock ane, the Laird's Wat twa,
O Hobbie Noble, thou ane maun be!
Thy coat is blue, thou hast been true,
Since England banish'd thee to me."

* Torrents.

Now Hobbie was an English man,
In Bewcastle dale was bred and born:
But his misdeeds they were sae great,
They banish'd him ne'er to return.

Laird Mangerton them orders gave,
"Your horses the wrang way maun be shod;
Like gentlemen ye maunna seem,
But look like corn-cadgers ga'en the road.

"Your armour gude ye maunna show,
Nor yet appear like men o' weir;
As country lads be a' array'd,
Wi' branks and brecham on each mare."

Sae their horses are the wrang way shod,
And Hobbie has mounted his grey sae fine;
Jock his lively bay, Wat's on his white horse behind,
And on they rode for the water of Tyne.

At the Cholerford they all light down,
And there, wi' the help of the light o' the moon,
A tree they cut, wi' fifteen nogs on each side,
To climb up the wa' of Newcastle toun.

But when they cam' to Newcastle toun,
And were alighted at the wa',
They fand their tree three ells ower laigh,
They fand their stick baith short and sma'.

Then up and spak' the laird's ain Jock:
"There's naething for't; the gates we maun force."
But when they cam' the gate untill,
A proud porter withstood baith men and horse.

His neck in twa the Armstrangs wrung;
Wi' fute or hand he ne'er play'd pa!
His life and his keys at anes they hae ta'en,
And cast the body ahint the wa'.

Now sune they reach Newcastle jail,
And to the prisoner thus they call;
"Sleeps thou, wakes thou, Jock o' the Side,
Or art thou weary of thy thrall?"

Jock answers thus, wi' dulefu' tone;
"Aft, aft, I wake—I seldom sleep;
But whae's this kens my name sae weel,
And thus to ease my wae does seek?"

Then out and spak' the gude Laird's Jock,
"Now fear ye na, my billie," quo' he;
"For here are the Laird's Jock, the Laird's Wat,
And Hobbie Noble, come to set thee free."

"Now haud thy tongue, my gude Laird's Jock,
For ever, alas! this canna be;
For if a' Liddesdale were here the night,
The morn's the day that I maun die.

"Full fifteen stane o' Spanish iron,
They hae laid a' right sair on me;
Wi' locks and keys I am fast bound
Into this dungeon dark and dreirie."

"Fear ye nae that," quo' the Laird's Jock;
"A faint heart ne'er won a fair ladie;
Work thou within, we'll work without,
And I'll be sworn we'll set thee free."

The first strong door that they cam' at,
They loosed it without a key;
The next chain'd door that they cam' at,
They gar'd it a' to flinders flee.

The prisoner now upon his back,
The Laird's Jock has gotten up fu' hie;
And down the stair, him, irons and a',
Wi' nae sma' speid and joy brings he.

"Now, Jock, my man," quo' Hobbie Noble,
"Some o' his weight ye may lay on me."
"I wat weel no!" quo' the Laird's ain Jock,
"I count him lighter than a flee."

Sae out at the gates they a' are gane,
The prisoner's set on horseback hie;
And now wi' speid they've ta'en the gate,
While ilk ane jokes fu' wantonlie:

"O Jock! sae winsomely's ye ride,
Wi' baith your feet upon ae side;
Sae weel ye're harness'd, and sae trig,
In troth ye sit like ony bride!"

The night, tho' wat, they did na mind,
But hied them on fu' merrilie,
Until they cam' to Cholerford brae,*
Where the water ran like mountains hie.

But when they cam' to Cholerford,
There they met with an auld man;

* A ford upon the Tyne, above Hexham.

Says—"Honest man, will the water ride?
Tell us in haste if that ye can."

"I wat weel no," quo' the gude auld man;
"I hae lived here thirty years and three,
And I ne'er yet saw the Tyne sae big,
Nor running anes sae like a sea."

Then out and spoke the Laird's saft Wat,
The greatest coward in the companie:
"Now halt, now halt! we needna try't;
The day is come we a' maun die!"

"Puir faint-hearted thief!" cried the Laird's ain Jock.
"There'll nae man die but him that's fey;*
I'll guide ye a' right safely thro';
Lift ye the prisoner on ahint me."

Wi' that the water they hae ta'en,
By ane's and twa's they a' swam thro';
"Here are we a' safe," quo' the Laird's Jock,
"And, puir faint Wat, what think ye now?"

They scarce the other brae had won,
When twenty men they saw pursue;
Frae Newcastle toun they had been sent,
A' English lads baith stout and true.

But when the land-serjeant the water saw,
"It winna ride, my lads," says he;
Then cried aloud—"The prisoner take,
But leave the fetters, I pray, to me."

* Predestined.

"I wat weel no," quo' the Laird's Jock;
"I'll keep them a'; shoon to my mare they'll be,
My gude bay mare—for I am sure,
She has bought them a' right dear frae thee."

Sae now they are on to Liddesdale,
E'en as fast as they could them hie;
The prisoner is brought to's ain fire-side,
And there o' his airns they mak' him free.

"Now, Jock, my billie," quo' a' the three,
"The day is com'd thou was to die;
But thou's as weil at thy ain ingle-side,
Now sitting, I think, 'twixt thee and me."

HOBBIE NOBLE.

We have seen how this English outlaw aided two chiefs of the Armstrongs in rescuing a captive kinsman from the hands of the English. He now appears as a victim to the treachery of comrades, a fate which not unfrequently befell the gentlemen of the morass, as well as their more cultivated brethren of the road.

I must, however, say this for the Borderers on either side, that, notwithstanding their loose notions on the subject of property, their faith to each other was generally preserved inviolate. At least I know of no instance in which kindred or national ties were broken; and the idea of delivering up a kindly Scot, whatever might have been his offences, to the English warden or land-serjeant, would have been scouted by the most lawless ruffian that ever made free with his neighbour's cattle. But it seems too evident that they did not always stretch this rude virtue of fidelity so far as to make it apply to refugees who sought their hospitality. The most noted breach of confidence which is on record was committed by one Eckie or Hector of Harelaw, an inhabitant of the Debatable Land, who delivered up to the Regent Murray the unfortunate Earl of Northumberland, who headed the great northern insurrection against Queen Elizabeth in the year 1569. Northumberland was detained a prisoner in the castle of Lochleven until 1572, when Morton, being elected Regent of Scotland, surrendered him to the English. Hobbie Noble was in like manner betrayed by one of the Armstrongs, but without the connivance of their chief, the Laird of Manger-

ton, who is said to have taken a severe revenge upon all concerned in the deed of treachery.

This ballad, like the foregoing one, first appeared in the "Hawick Poetical Museum."

FOUL fa' the breast first treason bred in!
That Liddesdale may safely say:
For in it there was baith meat and drink,
And corn unto our geldings gay.

And we were a' stout-hearted men,
As England she might often say;
But now we may turn our backs and flee,
Since brave Noble is sold away.

Now Hobbie was an Englishman,
And born into Bewcastle dale;
But his misdeeds they were sae great,
They banish'd him to Liddesdale.

At Kershope foot the tryst was set,
Kershope of the lilye lee;
And there was traitor Sim o' the Mains,
And with him a private companie.

Then Hobbie has graithed his body fair,
Baith wi' the iron and wi' the steel;
And he has ta'en out his fringed grey,
And there, brave Hobbie, he rade him weel.

Then Hobbie is down the water gane,
E'en as fast as he could hie;
Tho' a' should hae bursten and broken their hearts,
Frae that riding tryst he wad na be.

"Weel be ye met, my feres five!
And now, what is your will wi' me?"
Then they cried a' wi' ae consent,
"Thou'rt welcome here, brave Noble, to me.

"Wilt thou with us into England ride,
And thy safe warrand we will be?
If we get a horse worth a hundred pound,
Upon his back thou sune shalt be."

"I daur na by day into England ride!
The land-serjeant has me at feid:
And I know not what evil may betide,
For Peter of Whitfield, his brother, is dead.

"And Anton Shiel he loves not me,
For I gat twa drifts o' his sheep;
The great Earl of Whitfield loves me not,
For nae gear frae me he e'er could keep.

"But will ye stay till the day gae down,
Until the night come o'er the grund,
And I'll be a guide worth ony twa,
That may in Liddesdale be found?

"Tho' the night be black as pitch and tar,
I'll guide ye o'er yon hill sae hie;
And bring ye a' in safety back,
If ye'll be true and follow me."

He has guided them o'er moss and muir,
O'er hill and hope, and bent sae broun;
Until they came to the Foulbogshiel,
And there, brave Noble, he lighted doun.

But word is gane to the land-serjeant,
In Askerton where that he lay—
"The deer, that ye hae hunted sae lang,
Is seen into the Waste this day."

"Then Hobbie Noble is that deer!
I wat he carries the style fu' hie;
Aft has he driven our sleuth-hounds back,
And set ourselves at little lee.

"Gar warn the bows of Hartlie-burn;
See they sharp their arrows on the wa':
Warn Willeva and Speir Edom,
And see the morn they meet me a'.

"Gar meet me on the Rodric-haugh,
And see it be by break o' day;
And we will on to Conscouthart-green,
For there, I think, we'll get our prey."

Then Hobbie Noble has dreimit a dreim,
In the Foulbogshiel, where that he lay;
He dreimit his horse was aneath him shot,
And he himself got hard away.

The cocks could craw, the day could daw,
And I wot sae even fell down the rain;
Had Hobbie na wakened at that time,
In the Foulbogshiel he had been slain.

"Awake, awake, my feres five!
I trow here makes a fu' ill day;
Yet the worst cloak o' this company,
I hope shall cross the Waste this day."

Now Hobbie thought the gates were clear ;
But ever, alas ! it was na sae :
They were beset by cruel men and keen,
That away brave Hobbie might na gae.

"Yet follow me, my feres five,
And see ye keep of me guid ray ;
And the worst cloak o' this company
Even yet may cross the Waste this day."

But the land-serjeant's men came Hobbie before,
The traitor Sim came Hobbie behin',
So had Noble been wight as Wallace was,
Away, alas ! he might na win.

Then Hobbie had but a laddie's sword ;
But he did mair than a laddie's deed ;
For that sword had cleared Conscouthart-green,
Had it not broke o'er Jerswigham's head.

Then they hae ta'en brave Hobbie Noble,
Wi's ain bowstring they band him sae ;
But his gentle heart was ne'er sae sair,
As when his ain five bound him on the brae.

They hae ta'en him on for west Carlisle ;
They asked him if he kend the way ?
Tho' much he thought, yet little he said ;
He knew the gate as weel as they.

They hae ta'en him up the Ricker-gate ;
The wives they cast their windows wide :
And every wife to another can say,
"That's the man loosed Jock o' the Side !"

"Fy on ye, women ! why ca' ye me man ?
For it's nae man that I'm used like ;

I am but like a forfoughen hound,
Has been fighting in a dirty syke."

They hae had him up thro' Carlisle town,
And set him by the chimney fire;
They gave brave Noble a loaf to eat,
And that was little his desire.

They gave him a wheaten loaf to eat,
And after that a can of beer;
And they a' cried, with one consent,
"Eat, brave Noble, and make gude cheer!

"Confess my lord's horse, Hobbie," they said,
"And to-morrow in Carlisle thou's na die."
"How can I confess them," Hobbie says,
"When I never saw them with my e'e?"

Then Hobbie has sworn a fu' great aith,
By the day that he was gotten and born,
He never had ony thing o' my lord's,
That either eat him grass or corn.

"Now fare thee weel, sweet Mangerton!
For I think again I'll ne'er thee see:
I wad hae betrayed nae lad alive,
For a' the gowd o' Christentie.

"And fare thee weel, sweet Liddesdale!
Baith the hie land and the law;
Keep ye weel frae the traitor Mains;
For gowd and gear he'll sell ye a'."

Yet wad I rather be ca'd Hobbie Noble,
In Carlisle, where he suffers for his fau't,
Than I'd be ca'd the traitor Mains,
That eats and drinks o' the meal and maut.

DONALD OF THE ISLES.

THIS is a version, hitherto unpublished, of a ballad better known by the name of "Lizie Lindsay," which title I would have given it, but for the confusion arising from the circumstance that another popular ballad, on a similar subject, is called "Lizie Baillie." This has led to the conjecture that they are variations of the same composition; but I am quite satisfied that they refer to different incidents, and were written at different periods.

I owe this version to the kindness of Mr Kinloch, in whose manuscript collection it is inserted, as taken down from recitation in the Mearns. Mr Kinloch says, in a note: "It is very popular in the north; and few milk-maids in that quarter but can chaunt it to a very pleasant tune."

Besides various stall editions, copies of Lizie Lindsay have been printed by Messrs Jamieson, Buchan, and Whitelaw. The two first are indifferent, but Mr Whitelaw's is a very spirited version. I should add that Mr Buchan has published a ballad, under the title of "Donald of the Isles," which is simply a variety of the rather rude ditty called "Glasgow Peggie," which will be found in this collection. The elopement of Lowland maidens with strapping Highlanders was a favourite theme of the north-country minstrels; and such occurrences were by no means unusual. More than a century ago, a maternal grand-aunt of the Editor, a daughter of Keir of Kinmonth and Wester Rhynd, in the lowlands of Perthshire, was wooed by Robertson of Blairfettie, a Highland gentleman of more following than means, whose estate lay beyond the Pass of Killiecrankie. The young lady was willing, but her father was resolute against the match; and,

observing that the paternal decision was not received with perfect acquiescence, the old laird took the precaution of carrying the keys of the house every night into his bed-chamber. But love laughs at locksmiths. Notwithstanding all interdiction, a correspondence was established, and, by a singular coincidence, Miss Keir managed to possess herself of the keys on the same night when Blairfettie, with twenty of his clan, crossed the Earn. Next day there was a jovial wedding beyond the Pass; but old Keir never forgave his daughter. Certainly she paid the penalty for her disobedience. Her husband, like all of his sept, the clan Donochie, was an enthusiastic loyalist, and took up arms when Prince Charles Edward landed in Scotland. He served during the whole campaign, was taken prisoner at Culloden, but escaped by the desperate expedient of swimming to shore when the vessel in which he was confined was near the coast of England. He found his way to France, but was never allowed to return. The House of Blairfettie was burned down by the soldiery of Cumberland; and the unfortunate wife, with her infant child, was forced to seek refuge in the shealings of the goat-herds in the recesses of Ben-y-gloe. This is no legend. The Editor has it from the lips of his own mother, who well remembers the wilful lady of the Rhynd.

IT'S of a young lord o' the Hielands,
A bonnie braw castle had he;
And he says to his lady mither,
"A boon ye will grant to me:
Shall I gang to Edinbruch city,
And fetch hame a lady wi' me?"

"Ye may gae to Edinbruch city,
And fetch hame a lady wi' thee;
But see that ye bring her but flatt'rie,
And court her in great povertie."

"My coat, mither, shall be o' the plaiden,
A tartan kilt over my knee;
Wi' hosens, and brogues, and the bonnet,
I'll court her wi' nae flatterie."

When he cam' to Edinbruch city,
He play'd at the ring and the ba',
And saw mony a bonnie young lady,
But Lizie Lindsay was first o' them a'.

Syne dressed in his Hieland grey plaiden,
His bonnet abune his e'e-bree,
He called on fair Lizie Lindsay,
Says, "Lizie, will ye fancy me?

"And gae to the Hielands, my lassie,
And gae, gae wi' me?
O gae to the Hielands, Lizie Lindsay,
I'll feed ye on curds and green whey.

"And ye'se get a bed o' green bracken,
My plaidie will hap thee and me;
Ye'se lie in my arms, bonnie Lizie,
If ye'll gae to the Hielands wi' me."

"O how can I gae to the Hielands,
Or how can I gae wi' thee,
When I dinna ken whare I'm gaing,
Nor wha 'tis I hae to gae wi'?"

"My father he is an auld shepherd,
My mither she is an auld dey;*

* Dairy-woman.

My name it is Donald Macdonald,
My name I will never deny."

"O Donald, I'll gi'e you five guineas,
To sit but ae hour in my room,
Till I tak' aff your ruddy picture,
When I hae it I'll never think lang."

"I dinna care for your five guineas,
It's you that's the jewel to me;
I've plenty o' kye in the Hielands
To feed you wi' curds and green whey.

"And ye'se get a bonnie blue plaidie,
Wi' red and green stripes through it a';
And I'll be the lord of your dwelling,
And that's the best picture ava'.

"And I'm laird of a' my possessions,
The King canna boast o' nae mair;
And ye'se hae my true heart in keeping,
There'll no other ane hae a share.

"Sae gae to the Hielands, my lassie,
O gae awa' happy wi' me;
O gae to the Hielands, Lizie Lindsay,
And herd the wee lammies wi' me!"

"O how can I gae wi' a stranger,
O'er hills and o'er glens frae my hame?"
"I tell ye I am Donald Macdonald,
I'll ever be proud o' my name."

Down cam' Lizie Lindsay's ain father,
A knight o' a noble degree;

Says, "If ye do steal my dear daughter,
It's hanged ye quickly shall be!"

On his heel he turned round sae quickly,
And a light lauch he did gie;
"There's nae law in your Edinbruch city,
This day that can daur to hang me!"

Then up bespak Lizie's bower-maiden,
And a bonnie young lassie was she—
"If I had but ae crown in the warld,
It's Donald that I wad gae wi'."

"O Helen, wad ye leave your coffer,
And a' your silk kirtles sae braw,
And gang wi' a puir Hieland laddie,
And leave father, mither, and a'?

"But I think he's a witch or a warlock,
Or something o' that fell degree,
For I'll gae awa' wi' young Donald,
Whatever my fortune may be."

Then Lizie laid doun her silk mantle,
And put on her waiting-maid's goun;
And aff and awa to the Hielands,
She's gane wi' this young shepherd loun.

Thro' glens and o'er mountains they wander'd,
Till Lizie had scantly a shoe;
"Alas, and O hone!" says fair Lizie,
"Sad was the first day I saw you!
I wish I were in Edinbruch city;
Fu' sair, sair, this pastime I rue."

"O haud your tongue now, bonnie Lizie,
For yonder's the shealing, my hame;
And there's my gude auld honest mither,
That's coming to meet ye her lane."

"O ye're welcome, ye're welcome, Sir Donald,
Ye're welcome hame to your ain!"
"O ca' me na young Sir Donald,
But ca' me Donald my son."
And this they hae spoken in Erse,
That Lizie might not understan'.

"Ye'll gae now and mak' to our supper,
A cup of the curds and green whey;
And ye'll mak' a bed o' green rashes,
Likewise a happing o' gray."

The morning was drumlie and drearie,
They lay till 'twas lang o' the day;
"Win up, win up, bonnie Lizie,
And help at the milking the kye."

O slowly raise up Lizie Lindsay,
The saut tear blindit her e'e;
"O were I in Edinbruch city,
The Hielands should never see me!"

He led her up to a hie mountain,
And bade her look out far and wide;
"I'm Lord o' thae isles and thae mountains,
And now you're my lady and bride.

"Sae rue na ye've come to the Hielands,
Sae rue na ye've come aff wi' me;
For ye're the Macdonald's braw lady,
And will be to the day that ye dee."

ELORE, LO.

I CAN give no account of this poem, beyond the fact that I find it in Herd's early collection. It is evidently ancient, and, though somewhat obscurely expressed, of high merit; but I have not found it reprinted elsewhere. It is one of those compositions which may rank either as a ballad or a song; but I cannot find any trace of its having been set to music. It will in no way surprise me if I should be accused of ignorance respecting this production, which possibly may be better known than I am aware of; if so, I shall content myself with the sportsman's apology, that it is a very difficult thing to find every bird of a scattered covey.

IN a garden so green of a May morning,
Heard I my lady pleen * of paramours;
Said she, "My love so sweet, come ye not yet, not yet,
Hight you not me to meet amongst the flowers?
ELORE! ELORE! ELORE! ELORE!
I love my lusty love, ELORE LO!

"The light upspringeth, the dew down dingeth,
The sweet lark singeth her hours of prime;
Phœbus up spenteth, joy to rest wenteth,
So lost is mine intents, and gone is the time.

* Complain.

ELORE! ELORE! ELORE! ELORE!
I love my lusty love, ELORE LO!

"Danger my dead is, false fortune my feid* is,
And languor my lead is, but† hope I despair,
Disdain my desire is, so strangeness my fear is,
Deceit out of all ware; adieu, I fare.
ELORE! ELORE! ELORE! ELORE!
I love my lusty love, ELORE LO!"

Then to my lady blyth, did I my presence kyth,‡
Saying; "My bird, be glad; am I not yours?"
So in my arms too, did I the lusty jo,
And kissed her times mo, than night hath hours.
ELORE! ELORE! ELORE! ELORE!
I love my lusty love, ELORE LO!

"Live in hope, lady fair, and repel all despair,
Trust that your true love shall you not betray;
When deceit and languor is banisht from your bower,
I'll be your paramour and shall you please;
ELORE! ELORE! ELORE! ELORE!
I love my lusty love, ELORE LO!

"Favour and duty, unto your bright beauty,
Confirmed has lawtie obeyed to truth;
So that your soverance, heartilie but variance,
Mark in your memorance mercy and ruth.
ELORE! ELORE! ELORE! ELORE!
I love my lusty love, ELORE LO!

* Enemy. † Without. ‡ Make known.

"Yet for your courtesie, banish all jealousie,
Love for love lustily, do me restore;
Then with us lovers young, true love shall rest and reign,
Solace shall sweetly sing for ever more;
ELORE! ELORE! ELORE! ELORE!
I love my lusty love, ELORE LO!"

ROSLIN'S DAUGHTER.

THIS very popular ballad is sometimes called "Captain Wedderburn's Courtship." It has been often printed, but without any variations of importance in the text. I am not aware of any story upon which it is founded.

The introduction of riddles as part of the machinery of their ballads, was rather a favourite practice of the early minstrels. Instances of it may be found in the ballad poetry of England; and there is another example in "Proud Lady Margaret," included in this collection.

THE Laird of Roslin's daughter,
Walked through the wood her lane;
And by cam' Captain Wedderburn,
A servant to the king.
He said unto his serving man,
"Were't not against the law,
I wad tak her to my ain bed,
And lay her neist the wa'."

"I am walking here alane," she says,
"Among my father's trees;
And you must let me walk alane,
Kind sir, now, if you please:

The supper bell it will be rung,
And I'll be missed awa;
Sae I winna lie in your bed,
Either at stock or wa'."

He says, "My pretty lady,
I pray, lend me your hand,
And ye'll hae drums and trumpets
Always at your command;
And fifty men to guard you wi',
That well their swords can draw;
Sae we'se baith lie in ae bed,
And ye'se lie neist the wa'."

"Haud awa frae me," she said,
"And pray let gae my hand:
The supper bell it will be rung;
I can nae langer stand;
My father he will angry be,
Gin I be missed awa;
Sae I'll na lie in your bed,
Either at stock or wa'."

Then said the pretty lady,
"I pray tell me your name?"
"My name is Captain Wedderburn,
A servant to the king:
Though thy father and his men were here,
O' them I'd have nae awe;
But wad tak you to my ain bed,
And lay you neist the wa'."

He lichtit aff his berry-brown steed,
And set this lady on;

And held her by the milk-white hand,
Even as they rade along.
He held her by the middle jimp,
For fear that she should fa',
To tak her to his ain bed,
And lay her neist the wa'.

He took her to his lodging-house;
His landlady look'd ben;
Says, "Mony a pretty lady,
In Edinbruch I've seen;
But sic a lovely face as thine
In it I never saw;
Gae mak her down a down-bed,
And lay her at the wa'."

"O haud away frae me," she says;
"I pray you let me be;
I winna gang into your bed,
Till ye dress me dishes three:
Dishes three ye maun dress me,
Gin I should eat them a',
Afore that I lie in your bed,
Either at stock or wa'.

"It's ye maun get to my supper
A cherry without a stane;
And ye maun get to my supper
A chicken without a bane;
And ye maun get to my supper
A bird without a ga';*

* Gall. It is a popular notion in Scotland that the dove sent from the ark by Noah flew until it burst its gall, and transmitted the physical peculiarity to its descendants.

Or I winna lie in your bed,
Either at stock or wa'."

"It's when the cherry is in the flirry,
I'm sure it has nae stane;
And when the chicken's in the egg,
I wat it has nae bane;
And, sin' the flood o' Noah,
The dow she had nae ga';
Sae we'll baith lie in ae bed,
And ye'se lie neist the wa'."

"O haud your tongue, young man," she says,
"Nor that gate me perplex;
For ye maun tell me questions yet,
And that is questions six:
Questions six ye'll tell to me,
And that is three times twa,
Afore I lie in your bed,
Either at stock or wa'.

"What's greener than the greenest grass?
What's higher than the trees?
What's waur nor an ill woman's wish?
What's deeper than the seas?
What bird sings first? and whereupon
First doth the dew down fa'?
Ye sall tell afore I lay me down,
Either at stock or wa'."

"Vergris is greener than the grass;
Heaven's higher than the trees;
The deil's waur nor a woman's wish,
Hell's deeper than the seas;

The cock craws first; on cedar tap
The dew down first doth fa';
Sae we'll baith lie in ae bed,
And ye'se lie neist the wa'."

"O haud your tongue, young man," she says,
"And gie your fleechin ower;
Unless ye find me ferlies,*
And that is ferlies four;
Ferlies four ye maun find me,
And that is twa and twa;
Or I'll never lie in your bed,
Either at stock or wa'.

"It's ye maun get to me a plum,
That in December grew;
And ye maun get a silk mantel,
That waft was ne'er ca'd through;
A sparrow's horn; a priest unborn,
This night to join us twa;
Or I'll nae lie in your bed,
Either at stock or wa'."

"My father he has winter fruit,
That in December grew;
My mother has an Indian gown,
That waft was ne'er ca'd through;
A sparrow's horn is quickly found;
There's ane on every claw,
There's ane upon the neb o' him;
Perhaps there may be twa.

* Strange things; wonders.

The priest, he's standing at the door,
Just ready to come in;
Nae man can say that he was born,
Nae man, unless he sin;
A wild boar tore his mother's side,
He out o' it did fa';
Sae we'll baith lie in ae bed,
And ye'll lie neist the wa'."

Little kenn'd Girzie Sinclair,
That morning when she rase,
That this wad be the hindermost
O' a' her maiden days.
But now there's no within the realm,
I think, a blyther twa;
And they baith lie in ae bed,
And she lies neist the wa'.

THE HONEYMOON.

THIS was the name given by Ritson to the strange old ballad printed beneath, which is preserved in a curious volume of miscellaneous poetry, among the Cotton Manuscripts in the British Museum. Mr Laing objects to the title, preferring to call it "Ane Ballat of Matrimonie;" but that of Ritson, though possibly modern in itself, seems most appropriate to the subject, and therefore I have preserved it. The poem is evidently of Scottish origin; but I suspect that the transcriber has altered many words, so as to render it more easily intelligible to the English ear.

BY west of late as I did walk,
In the prime time of the day,
It was my chance to hear the talk
Of twa young folks, in fay;
They'd na been married at the kirk
Three days then fully past,
The gudeman bad his wife to work,
"Nay, soft," quoth she, "nae haste;
For now,
I will," quoth she, "not work for thee,
I make to God a vow!"

"An' if thou wilt not work," quoth he,
"Thou drab, I shall thee drive!"
"I would to God, thou knave," quoth she,
"Thou durst that matter pry so."

The gudeman for to beat his wife
In hand apace he went—
He caught twa blows upon his head,
For every one he lent
Indeed;
He never blan, beating her then—
Till baith his eyes did bleed.

He was sae stout and stern that stour,
And fierce with her in fight,
That even upon the stony floor—
She knock'd his head full right.
The gudewife was wondrous weak in hand,
Fearful, and nothing bold;
But he—had never a foot to stand,
When she of him caught hold
By the craig;
And with her fist his mouth she kiss'd
As fast as it might wag.

"Now then," she cryed loud, "Alack!
I do you well to wit"—
But he lay down upon his back,
And she stood on her feet;
Bending herself to him apace,
She cry'd him mercy then;
And pyll'd the bark even off his face,
With her commandments ten;
And aft,
She did him lose, about the nose,
Till all his face was saft.

Now when the neibours heard the noise
Se[illegible] lang between them twain;

They wist it was na wanton toys,
And fast thither they ran.
But when they came, in vain it was,
The doors was sparred round;
The gudewife cryed "Out, alas!"
But he—lay on the ground,
Well beat;
Lying along, he said, anon
That better he would her beat.

His neibours they were sore afraid
That he would kill his wife,
Then him full instantly they pray'd
To stint, and leave his strife,
And not his wrath upon her wreak;
They did him all exhort.
"Nay, nay," quoth he, "I shall her teach,
How she shall be sae short
With me"—
Yet on his face, she laid apace,
And cried him still, "Mercie!"

Which thing to hear, the neibours all
Did pity her so sore,
That to the gudeman they did call,
And said, "For shame! no more:"
He bad them then go pyke them home,
And there go meddle them now;
"I am," quoth he, "not such a one
To leave fighting for you,
I trow."
Yet for all this, they said I wis,
Small neibourhood he did show.

Some pray'd him in avoiding crime,
That he his hand would haud
"Let her," quoth he, "another ti
Not be with me sae bauld;
For suredly an owght I were,
To bide her taunt or check."—
But he could scant the same declare,
She held so fast his neck,
In a band;
"Alas!" quoth she; "will ye kill me?
Sweet husband, hauld your hand!"

His neibours then were sore afraid,
That he would her devour;
The doors then being fast sparrèd,
They threw them on the floor.
The gudewife leap'd away apace,
For shame put her to flight;
And he, well-blown about the face,
Began to stand upright,
Near mad:
No wight of skill, I think, judge will,
But he thereof was glad.

Although his back was somewhat dusty,
After a foolish guise,
Yet was the man himself so lusty—
That scarcely he could rise.
The gudewife did her chamber take,
Showing herself in dread;
To neibours the gudeman mirth did make,
To them that saw that deed,
All and some;

To whom he sware, that he had there
Slain her, had they not come.

Wish all young married wives I will,
No such masters to pryve,
But e'en obey your husbands still,
Lest they to work you drive;
And, seeing that it is not best
To live in bate and strife,
God send therefore that quiet rest,
May be with man and wife,
To the end:
So let us pray, both night and day,
That God such grace may send.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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